OR HUGO'S POEMS

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TRANSLATIONS FROM THE POEMS OF VICTOR HUGO.

BY HENRY CARRINGTON, M.A., DEAN OF BOCKING.

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1887a

I DEDICATE

THESE TRANSLATIONS

TO

MY WIFE AND CHILDREN,

AT WHOSE INSTANCE THEY WERE MADE.

Deanery, Bocking,
September 30, 1885.

"Qu 'importe ! les cœurs sont ivres
Les temps qui viennent feront
Ce qu 'ils pourront de mes livres
Et de moi, ce qu 'ils voudront."

—*Chansons des rues et des bois.*

Prefatory Notice.

IT has been said that in these days we know too much about our great men. The "fierce light" that beats around the lives of men of genius exaggerates and often distorts every unimportant detail, every subsidiary feature, so that we are shown shreds and patches rather than any comprehensive or comprehensible unit, and a jargon of discussion rises in place of a calm judgment It is as though some great old picture were exposed to a glare so intense that only its cracks and scores would attract notice, while the design as a whole was lost. Victor Hugo, however, is not likely to suffer, nor will our estimate of him undergo much change, from anything that other men may say

about him. Partly from the fact that his personality was of the least complex nature; partly because in his works, and especially in his poems, he gave himself so entirely and unreservedly to the world that they always remain his most faithful biography.

In a brief notice like the present, it will be more useful to turn our attention to a few points in this intimate connection between the poet and his creations than to attempt to follow step by step the traces of the long life which began at Besançon, *Septidi ventôse an X de la République* (Feb. 26, 1802), and ended in Paris, May 22, 1885—traces inseparably interwoven with nearly a century of French history.

Victor Hugo was deeply influenced by the accidents of his birth and parentage. His father, a Lorrainer of probably Teutonic origin, a good man and excellent soldier, who was among the first to defend the Republic and the last to abandon the Empire; his mother, a Breton, daughter of an armourer, by name Trébuchet, a free-thinker in religion, but a strong royalist in politics: here we have the basis of Victor Hugo's first modes of thought. It was the basis of something more vital: of that catholicity which enabled him to see good in the upholders of the most diverse *régimes;* to

paint Lantenac* in that prose epic of the Revolution "'93," with a touch not less profoundly sympathetic than that which drew the initiators of the New Idea—

> "Fidèle enfin au sang qu'ont versé dans ma veine,
> Mon père vieux soldat, ma mère vendéenne."

When Victor was four or five years old, Major Hugo was charged by Joseph Bonaparte to root out brigandage from his new dominions, in performance of which mission he captured the famous Fra Diavolo. As a reward he was made Governor of Avellino, and on receiving the appointment he summoned his wife and children to join him. The youngest, a thoughtful little boy, with a sweet face, was too young to remember very much of these travels; yet it is likely that the rays of the southern sun burnt themselves into his brain and set their

* "Possibly you don't know what a gentleman is," says the Marquis. "Well, here is one, 'tis I. Look, 'tis curious; some one who believes in God, tradition, the family, his ancestors, the example of his father; in fidelity, loyalty, duty towards his prince, respect for the old laws, in virtue, in justice." The words are spoken to Lantenac's revolutionary nephew, Gauvain, Hugo's own ideal hero, whose pure character found a close counterpart in the one lofty spirit of the Commune—Rossel.

mark on his mental and physical development. What is beyond doubt is that the later residence in Spain, where General Hugo followed King Joseph when his brother, much against his will, changed the seat of his precarious royalty, left an impression never to be cancelled on Victor Hugo's genius. The walls of the Jesuit College to which, to their sorrow, his brother Eugène and himself were relegated six weeks after their arrival at Madrid, could not shut out the glow of light and colour, the atmosphere yet more eastern than southern, which later was so deeply to affect one who had somewhat in common with Hugo, though his gifts were doomed to immaturity: the young French painter who died a hero, Henri Regnault. Spain was to Victor Hugo what Italy was to Goethe—a distinction fraught with significance. He carried away from his sojourn of hardly more than a year much besides the name of Hernani—the first place where he halted on Spanish ground, and where first he began to realise how the "imperturbable blue sky of Spain" needs for a balance the grave aspect of her towns.

The affairs of the unstable monarchy became more and more complicated, and early in 1812, Mme. Hugo took Eugène and Victor back to the old convent of the Feuillantines which had been

their home before they left Paris. The garden, their childhood's fairyland, seemed to have grown smaller in their absence, and it lost its charm when they were set to turn gardeners and bring its wildness into order. Through life Victor only loved a garden where birds, flowers, and trees were left to their own devices.

It was natural that his mother, not his father, should give their first direction to the poet's opinions. "The child thinks with the mother, the man will think with the father," General Hugo is reported to have said. Thus the poems written in boyhood savour of an ardent Royalism. Then the first strong influence he was conscious of, outside his home, that of Chateaubriand, filled up the space his mother had left vacant, and added altar to throne. The *Génie du Christianisme* may not seem to English readers a work calculated to attain the end proposed by its author, the restoration of Catholicism in France to the place held before the Revolution; but its extraordinary, if passing, imprint on what was then the young generation of educated Frenchmen, is not to be disputed. It was characteristic of the time and country that rhetoric and sentiment succeeded where harder reasoning would probably have failed.

Victor Hugo was borne away with the returning

tide of faith. Then came the popular revival of enthusiasm for the glories of the First Empire. On Hugo the revelation of the Napoleonic legend burst with a peculiar power and pathos : now first he seemed to understand his own father. There are few things in his writings finer than the passage in *Les Misérables*, where Marius proclaims to his companions his new-found Bonapartist creed, and asks what can be greater for a people than to form the empire of such a man ? a question answered by the unanswerable laconicism : "To be free !" That, however, was a conclusion reached by the Hugo of maturer years than were those of the author of *Les deux Iles* and the *Ode à la Colonne*.

From this stage of retrospective Imperialism, if it may so be called, Victor Hugo passed into allegiance to the citizen King, and belief in constitutional liberties. He accepted a seat in the House of Peers, with the title of Viscount, from Louis Philippe, to whom he addressed four of the loveliest lines he ever wrote, on behalf of A. Barbès, who was condemned to death for heading an unsuccessful insurrection—

"Par votre ange, envolé ainsi qu'une colombe,
Par ce royal enfant, doux et frêle roseau,
Grâce encore une fois, grâce au nom de la tombe !
Grâce au nom du berceau !"

The sentence was commuted. In the course of his long life the poet made similar appeals, with or without success, for a whole multitude of condemned, some of whom were pure patriots and philanthropists, like John Brown; some wretched felons and murderers, for whom, in his unwavering opposition to the penalty of death, he pleaded with passionate earnestness. In 1867, if we mistake not, he joined Garibaldi in a supplication for the life of the hapless Maximilian.

On the fall of the Monarchy of July, Victor Hugo anchored his political ship in what he was henceforth to regard as the haven of Republicanism. The establishment of the Second Empire drove him forth into an exile, which, though painful to the man, was eminently serviceable to the poet. Louis Napoleon became the object of the great hatred of his life, his one time enthusiasm for the uncle rising up as the most powerful engine of scorn for "le petit." It has been suggested that the ultimate mission of Napoleon III. in the economy of history, was to call down from Hugo the superb polemics of the "Châtiments," in which the swift and easy strength of Dryden is allied to an intensity and variety of invective scarcely to be found in any other poetry.

After the crossing of the midway of the century,

Victor Hugo remained a staunch but uncontroversial Republican. His particular shade of opinions was probably nearest to the humanitarian Republicanism of his friend Louis Blanc, but he accepted, in some sort, all Republican parties, from Opportunist to Social Democrat—from Gambetta to Pyat. Some of those who admired him most (such as Paul de Saint Victor) blamed his attitude of toleration towards the men "who pulled down the column to the applause of the Prussians;" but Victor Hugo would have been simply someone else and not himself, had he not found in the excuse he pleaded for the Anarchist—that of ignorance, *il ne sait pas lire*—not merely an extenuating circumstance, but the grounds for plenary absolution.

Through all the changes of his political garments, the poet carried an actual Ego which did not change. Never, paradox though it may seem, was there a man whose mind underwent so few real modifications. In that moral foundation, which, to external opinions, is what the support is to the arch—Victor Hugo was the same at his last day as in his earliest years.

What, then, was the unchanging motive power of the poet's life and work? To sum it up in one word, it was Universal Charity. Tears of pity

are the cleansing holy water at the gates of his temple :—

> " Car les pleurs sont sacrés ; ils sortent, pur dictame,
> Les pleurs humains, du cœur, les pleurs divins, de l'âme ;
> Dés que, s'examinant soi-même, on se résout
> A chercher le côté pardonnable de tout,
> Dés qu'on a rejeté l'amertume chagrine,
> Le réel se dévoile, on sent dans sa poitrine
> Un cœur nouveau qui s'ouvre et qui s'épanouit."

Though belief in the dogmas of Catholicism was with him but a passing phase—for, as has been pointed out, he was not even brought up as a Catholic—he was, in a certain sense, the most Christian poet that ever lived. He asks to his banquet not only all who suffer, but all who err ; he opens the doors of his Art to publicans and sinners, not to hold them up to shame and obloquy—not to show the incalculable train of human evil consequences growing out of one evil act, as the Greek dramatists showed, or to contemplate with Dante the inevitable penalty awaiting the individual ill-doer—but to welcome all who have strayed as the elect, essential if mysterious factors in the eternal plan.

Dante, indeed, was not without austere pity. Francesca's story could move him to faint and fall,

"even as falleth a dead body." But he wavered not one moment in accepting her doom as designed by the justice and wisdom of that "Primo Amore," whose august attributes were written over the portals of hell. Victor Hugo's conception of Divine Love was other than this. He looked into his own heart and saw nothing but final forgiveness and mansuetude, and he looked into heaven and saw only that same mansuetude. As for the patent fact of vice, suffering, oppression, and cruelty, he dismissed it with the word he imagined having seen graven in some dark corner of Notre Dame: ΑΝΑΓΚΗ. Man, he says, groans under the burden of Necessity; what Necessity is, has to be left untold.

Victor Hugo did not only hold out his hand to the attractive guilty, to the interesting law-breakers: the common murderer, the fallen woman, the thief who repays kindness by larceny, even at last, in the *Pitié Suprême*, the Tyrant himself, were invited to come in. And with these, the whole army of the disinherited, from the maimed hero of *L'homme qui rit*, back to the slave in *Bug Jargal*—the story written in a fortnight, for a wager, at sixteen years of age—a book of great psychological interest now, as showing how its author's whole system of heaven and earth was already formed in

his brain, and fit to come forth, Minerva-like, full grown.

He went into the highways and sought the halt and the blind, the hideous, the filthy, the vicious, to give their nakedness a beautiful raiment of poetic immortality. He had a scheme of salvation which to a certain extent he may be said to have originated. Repentance does not count for very much in this scheme, of which the all-in-all is the Redeeming Trait. Each one, even the worst, has done some action, has thought some thought, felt some emotion, which, be his sins a thousand weight, will bear him aloft. This is the *idée mère* in all that Victor Hugo wrote.

To sympathy with the guilty, which Hugo felt more strongly than any former poet, he joined in a measure not less supreme the worship of the entire innocence of childhood. The child who, in the person of the Infant Saviour, had formed the centre-piece to the revival of art, had yet to take a first place in literature. There were previsions: Hector, who lays down his plumed casque, which frightened the babe whom he takes in his arms and blesses; Danae, who bids her child sleep in the fragile bark, unconscious of the roaring of the sea and of the storm of human sorrow—in these pictures we see the pathos of the contrasting force

of infancy, "the star-light smile of children" illuminating the world's night. A further stage was reached in the baby saints of early hagiology, and in the pretty and tender fables of the apochryphal gospels, but these can hardly be claimed as literature. Here and there, it is wonderful how rarely, the child's figure reappears in modern poetry. Chaucer's "Prioress' Tale" would come to mind as a bright example did it not embody a millennial calumny. There is Shakespeare's "Arthur," there are Blake's inspired "Songs of Innocence," there is that slight, fair child, perhaps the most Hugoesque before Hugo, who, in the "Revolt of Islam," leads her graceful dance before the fallen and deserted tyrant. Still, the whole loveliness of childish ways was not seized till Victor Hugo wrote. His children are real children, absolutely, unadornedly real; but by this very reality, which is so nearly divine, they suggest that

> "Trailing clouds of glory, do we come
> From God, who is our home."

While on the subject of Hugo as poet of childhood, it will be well to glance at his domestic life. When the ages of the two numbered not more than thirty years, he pledged an unspoken troth to his

little play-fellow, Adèle Foucher. "You shall have a daughter, I will have a son: we will unite them together," Major Hugo had said at the wedding of Adèle's father. When first the parents saw that the prophecy was likely to be fulfilled, as the time was not yet ripe for its fulfilment, they separated the children. The proper day came without much delay; in 1822 Victor made 700 francs by his "Odes," which also won for him the promise of a small pension from Louis XVIII. It was thought, therefore, that he was in a position to embark in matrimony. He was married at the church of St. Sulpice, Lamennais (it may be mentioned, as indicating his then state of mind) giving him the certificate of confession required for the performance of the religious ceremony.

There was little in his purse—he had spent the 700 francs on a present for his bride; but he was prepared to work with redoubled diligence, since, as he said, the essence of Love is that it makes all sacrifices sweet.

Mme. Victor Hugo proved an admirable wife; it was she who, in 1863, published the best account of the poet's earlier years, under the title of *Victor Hugo raconté par un Témoin de sa vie.* It has been said that there is *Dichtung* bound up with the *Wahrheit*—fancy with the truth; but if in the

golden haze of the past some things looked to the writer not wholly as they were, the general impression produced is undoubtedly as accurate as it is vivid.

Five children were born of the union. The eldest daughter, Léopoldine, was drowned with her husband, Charles Vacquerie, on the Seine, between Rouen and Havre, three months after their marriage. They were staying at the pretty village of Villequier, famous equally for the beauty of its situation and for the numberless accidents that have occurred at this point in the river. "The Seine," writes the Abbé Cochet, "has here engulphed generations." One morning—it was the 4th of September 1843—Léopoldine got up early, and was eager for an excursion to the other side; they started in high spirits, she and her husband, who rowed, an old sailor, and a schoolboy of ten. A favouring breeze went with them, but the friends who awaited them on the opposite bank tried to dissuade them from returning by the same route. They persisted; a gust of wind overturned the boat, and all four were drowned. Their bodies were laid under the weeping willows of the Villequier churchyard. A second daughter, who was named Adèle, made an injudicious marriage, and afterwards lost her reason. She alone survives her father, unaware of

his death, and expecting the renewal of his weekly visits. There were three sons—one who died in infancy; François, the translator of Shakespeare; and Charles, the father of the grandchildren, Georges and Jeanne, who were the light and joy of the poet's declining years, his consolation under the successive calamities which but for them would have made his home desolate.

The sweet child-idyls of *L'art d'être Grand-père* become more interesting when it is known that they are simply the recital of little incidents in the daily life of these charming children. The present writer was told by Louis Blanc that he was a witness of many of the scenes which gave rise to little poems that will last as long as the French language. Here is one, just as it occurred. "You spoil those children," said Mme. Drouet, the lady who kept the poet's house; "it is impossible to do anything with them; it is you who should be put in the dark cupboard." "Never mind, grandfather," whispered Jeanne, lifting her beautiful eyes, "when you are in the dark cupboard I will bring you the pot of jam." The story will be easily recognised.

Not that it was only the children of his own house whom Victor Hugo loved. To take a child to him, of whatever people or nation, was a sure

introduction to his favour. He did not wish even his enemies a childless home—

"Seigneur! préservez-moi, préservez ceux que j'aime
Frères, parens, amis, et mes ennemis même
Dans le mal triomphans,
De jamais voir, Seigneur! l'été sans fleurs vermeilles
Le cage sans oiseaux, la ruche sans abeilles,
La maison sans enfans!"

It is well known that he gave weekly dinners to poor children at Guernsey during the chief part of his exile. Once, when in his island home he heard that the child of an English lady was ill with scarlet fever, he did not rest till he had obtained permission to visit the little invalid, by whose bedside, fearless of infection, he spent hours in relating enchanting wonder-tales, which made the time of convalescence pass quickly by. Ever after, on his birthday, he sent this child, even when she had grown to be a woman and had children of her own, some little token of remembrance. Such stories, which might be multiplied at will, speak yet more eloquently than the poet's large benefactions, of his goodness of heart.

The fall of the Empire in September 1870 restored Victor Hugo to France, and with his son Charles and his grand-children he lived in Paris

during the siege. In the spring of the next year he was returned with 214,000 votes to the National Assembly, which met at Bordeaux, but he resigned his seat on the invalidation of Garibaldi's election. "Of all the generals who fought for France, Garibaldi is the only one who was not beaten," he said, amidst such a storm of disapproval as has been rarely heard even in a French legislative body. It was only a variation of General Manteuffel's statement, that had the Italian hero been seconded instead of baulked by his French colleagues, "the campaign of the Vosges would have been the most fortunate of those fought by French armies in 1870-71." But to say what he did, when and where he said it, was in Victor Hugo a fearless and generous act which should not be forgotten.

The scene in the National Assembly was on the 8th of March. On the thirteenth, Charles Hugo accompanied his brother François and Louis Blanc, who were going by the mail train to Paris, to the Bordeaux railway station. Louis Blanc had dined with the poet that evening. "Be sure and come," the invitation ran, "as without you we shall be thirteen." But one of the guests failed, "So," as Louis Blanc used to say when he told the story, "I made them thirteen." While they were at dinner, Charles Hugo spoke more than once of the circumstance;

"This too," he said, "is the thirteenth of the month; some harm will come, you will see." He seemed strangely affected, but his friends tried to laugh him out of paying heed to so childish a superstition, and the impression appeared to pass off. Louis Blanc and François Hugo started on their journey; Charles returned to his father's house: when the carriage reached the door, he was found to be quite dead. It was a catastrophe as cruel and sudden as that which had robbed the poet of his beloved daughter.

During the Paris insurrection Victor Hugo went to Belgium, from which he was expelled for offering asylum to the flying Communists. He soon after went back to France, where he remained unmolested, though his recent course had raised some angry feelings against him. When, however, the intense passions excited by foreign and civil war cooled down, all classes and parties began to recognise that it would be well to give the world an example of a prophet honoured in his own country. The poet was in his last years the object of such popular homage as has been paid to no other literary man. His path to the inevitable bourne was literally strewn with flowers. Men came to him from the four corners of the earth. "Sire," he said one day to his visitor, the Emperor of Brazil, "allow me to present my grandson

Georges to your Majesty." "There is only one Majesty here, and it is yours," replied Don Pedro. If kings took off their crown to him, so did poets—

> . . . "Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance,
> Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance
> . . . . . their claim to be thy peers."

Victor Hugo was strong and vigorous to the last, disregarding precautions which many younger men think necessary. He would not wear an overcoat, and in all weathers he took the air in his favourite fashion on the outside of an omnibus. On important occasions he came down to the Academy, and to the Senate to which he was elected in 1876.

His latest public utterances were spoken by the graves of old friends who went before him. He never lost that vision of a better world which he once had said was, "what soothes suffering, what sanctifies labour, what makes men good, strong, wise, patient, benevolent, just, at the same time humble and great, and worthy of liberty." Those who mourned found in him an unfailing comforter. "Console yourself," he wrote to a mother distracted by the loss of her child, "it is only a departure, and that for us alone. The dead are not even absent, they are invisible. Every time you think of your poor little one, he will be near you." So

intolerable did life seem to him, if shorn of all thought of God, all hope in immortality, that in almost his last poem ("Réligion et Réligions") he prefers the crudest or most barbarous form of faith to

"Le silence hideux et funèbre de Rien."

When attacked by his fatal illness he felt at once that the end was at hand. "This is death!" he said to his friend Paul Meurice, and he added in Spanish—"It will be very welcome." Some of those who were with him say that they heard him say, "Separation," and "Adieu, Jeanne!" After that he spoke no more.

His bier was placed under the Arc de l'Etoile, and thence carried to the Pantheon on a poor man's hearse, as he had directed, in presence of an innumerable crowd of his fellow-citizens. It was said without much exaggeration: "This is not a funeral, but an apotheosis."

In reviewing Victor Hugo's literary life, the first thing that strikes one is its amazing fecundity. From his seventeenth to his eighty-third year he was never idle, producing with the regularity and rapidity of some great river which cannot be exhausted because renewed each spring from the fountain head of Alpine snows. His novels, *Han*

d' Islande, *Notre Dame de Paris*, *Les Misérables*, *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, *L'homme qui rit*, *Quatrevingt-treize*, might seem enough work for any one man to have done. His plays, "Cromwell," "Hernani," "Marion de Lorme," "Le Roi s'Amuse," "Lucrèce Borgia," "Marie Tudor," "Angelo," "Ruy Blas," "Les Burgraves," not only would have sufficed to give their author high rank in poetic literature, but also by them was effected a complete revolution in contemporary dramatic art. The battle of Romanticism, of which the gauntlet was thrown down in Hugo's early poems and novels, was fought out and won on the stage. The extraordinary excitement caused by the production of "Hernani" (February 25, 1830), the strenuous efforts of the whole body of classicists and reactionary academicians, first to prevent its representation, and later to procure its failure, and the unparalleled success of even the boldest of the innovations which Hugo had flung with audacious defiance in the face of his opponents, mark a turning point in the history of the French stage.

In addition to the prose works mentioned above, Victor Hugo wrote two tales in advocacy of the abolition of capital punishment, "Le Dernier jour d'un condamné," and "Claude Gueux;" two contributions to contemporary history, "Napoléon le

petit," and "L'histoire d'un crime;" a great number of political letters and addresses collected in "Actes et Paroles;" the touching sketch entitled "Mes fils;" two volumes of critical and philosophic essays, and a study on "William Shakespeare." This last is dedicated to England, "to which I speak the truth, but which I admire as a free and illustrious country, and love as a refuge." In the first pages is described how the poet and his son François were sitting together at Marine Terrace, Jersey, one melancholy November morning, when the latter said—"What think you of this exile?" "That it will be long," was the answer. "How do you mean to fill it?" The father replied, "I shall look at the sea." Then he added, "And you?" "I," said François, "shall translate Shakespeare."

First at Jersey, and afterwards at Guernsey, Victor Hugo was to spend nineteen years in thus contemplating the sea. It was with him a period of splendid activity, resulting not only in the works then published, but also in some of those which appeared later; the didactic poem, "Le Pape," the drama "Torquemada," and probably part of "L'Ane," belonging to that time. Nor do we know yet the extent of the harvest, since it is said that the waifs and strays stated in his "Literary Testament" to be the fruits of his exile, which he desires

to have published under the title "L'Océan," will be found to form no fewer than twenty volumes.

"Poet, dramatist, historian, philosopher, and patriot, the spiritual sovereign of the nineteenth century was before all things and above all things a poet." Posterity may be trusted to confirm these words of Mr. Swinburne. From the *Odes et Ballades* to the *Légende des Siècles*, from the *Voix Intérieures* to the *Quatre vents de L'Esprit*, from the *Contemplations* to *L'Art d'être Grand-père*, from the *Châtiments* to *L'Année Terrible*, there flows a flood of poetry—pathetic, scathing, simple, ornate—poetry which sounds all keys in the human heart, probes the depths of all human passions, scales all heights of human aspirations; poetry which surrounds Nature, embracing the stars of heaven and every little bird and flower. Is there a lack of proportion in such vastness, a want of measure in such magnificence? Perhaps; but when we have a Titan among us it is more profitable to admire than to criticise, and if ever man brought down to earth the divine fire, it was Victor Hugo.

E. MARTINENGO-CESARESCO.

Translations from the Poems of Victor Hugo.

From ODES AND BALLADS.

1818–1828.

[In the preface to the first edition of *Odes et Ballades* the author says that he had in its publication two intentions—the political and the literary—though, in his opinion, the former is the natural consequence of the latter, since the history of mankind has nothing in it of poetry, unless considered from the height of monarchical ideas, or of religious beliefs. The reader may observe, in the order of these Odes, a division, which, however, is not strictly methodical. The author thinks that the emotions of the soul are not less fruitful of poetry than the revolutions of an empire. But after all, the domain of poetry is boundless; beneath the external world an ideal world exists, which shows its splendour to the eyes of those whose deep thinkings have accustomed them to see in things more than the mere things. The great works of poetry of every class, whether in prose or verse, which have done honour to our age, have revealed the truth, scarcely ever suspected before, that poetry consists not in the form given to ideas, but in the ideas themselves. Poetry consists in divulging the inner meaning of all things.]

THE TWO ISLANDS.

I.

THERE are two Isles, whose oceans wide
A spacious world doth separate,
And which from far frown o'er the tide,
Like heads of Giants, gaunt and great;
And looking on their summits steep,
You guess God called them from the deep,
For some mysterious dread design.
Their brows with bolts of thunder smoke,
Their bare sides foam with ocean's stroke,
Their breasts volcanic groans confine.

These Isles, where Ocean's shattered spray
Upon the ruthless rocks is cast,
Seem like two treacherous ships of prey,
Made by eternal anchors fast.
The hand that settled bleak and black
Those shores on their unpeopled track,
And clad in fear and mystery,
Perchance thus made them tempest-torn,
That Bonaparte might there be born,
And that Napoleon there might die.

There was his cradle, there his Tomb,
'Tis for all time enough to say:
A world to life or death may come;
These words shall never fade away.
Upon those Isles, that dismal coast,
Shall come, at summons of his ghost,
All peoples of futurity.
Thunders that blast their rugged forms,
And all their rocks, and all their storms,
Nought but of him a record be.

Far from our shores, which rocked amain
The tempests of his lot beneath,
Upon these lonely Islands twain,
God placed his birth, and placed his death,
So that he might to life awake,
Nor conscious earth too deeply quake,
To tell the world his earliest day;
And that upon his warrior bed,
While stood the solid earth unswayed,
His soul might gently pass away.

II.

How did he dream when first his dawn arose!
How mused in sorrow at his journey's close!
'Twas that his frantic dream he had enjoyed.
Of Thrones and Glory now he knew the lies,
The dream's true worth lay bare before his eyes,
And all the nothingness of hope when tried.

E'en as a child, in Corsica were shown
Ambitious visions of his short-lived throne;
The Imperial Eagle on his flag waved out,
He heard beforehand, with prophetic pride,
The hymn that in all tongues his tent beside,
Sang subject nations with united shout.

III.

Fame to Napoleon! Fame be to the Lord supreme!
God's self upon his brow has placed the diadem!
From Nile to Dneiper he, triumphant, reigns alone;
Kings sprung from hundred kings before him shroud
their face,
And Rome itself he reckons fitting place
But for his new-born Infant's throne.

To bear his thunderbolt to many a trembling land
His Eagles, without pause, their dreadful wings expand.
The conclave, the Divan he doth in bondage hold,
And mingles with his flags, where blood for ever bides,
Crescents ta'en from the Pyramids,
And mighty Ivan's cross of gold.

The Mameluke bronzed, the Goth, unknowing flight and fear,
The valiant Pole, who bears a flame upon his spear,
Lend their blind strength to form his wild ambition's aid—
His will their only law, his fame their only faith ;
And march his banner's shade beneath
Armies, by hundred nations made.

And when his end is gained, he throws, with hasty palms,
To some successful chief a kingdom for an alms.
To guard his palace gates he subject monarchs set,
So that awhile he may, when war and banquets cease,
Among his conquests sleep at peace,
As fisherman among his nets.

He his imperial nest hath built so far and high,
He seems to us to dwell within that tranquil sky,
Where you shall never see the angry tempest break.
'Tis but beneath his feet the growling storms are sped,
And thunders to assault his head
Must to their highest source go back.

IV.

The bolt flew upwards : from his eyrie riven,
Blazing he falls beneath the stroke of heaven ;
Then kings their tyrant foe reward—

They chain him, living, on that lonely shore ;
And earth the captive giant handed o'er
To ocean's more resistless guard.

At St. Helena how he scorned his life !
When gazed his eye at eve, with envy rife,
Upon the sun's declining track ;
And when, with lonely steps, he trod the sand,
Till breaks his dream some gaoler's stern command,
Who cites him to his prison back.
With what despairing wrath this Lord of War
Heard himself blamed by those who just before
Worshipped, as though divine his art ;
The cry of Nations for revenge combined
Echoes the constant ruthless voice, confined
Within his self-accusing heart.

V.

Shame, hate, misfortune, vengeance, curses sore,
On him let heaven and earth together pour :
Now, see we dashed the vast Colossus low.
May he for ever rue, alive and dead,
All tears he caused mankind to shed,
And all the blood he caused to flow.

May at his name the Volga, Tiber, Seine,
Alhambra's walls, the ditch that girds Vincennes,
Taffa, the Kremlin, burnt without remorse,
Carnage and conquest from their fields exclaim
(In thunder echoing back his fatal fame),
" Him do the slaughtered nations curse."

Around him may he see his victims press,
And crowds on crowds, 'scaped from the dark abyss.

Countless, describe the secrets of the tomb ;
  Mangled and maimed by gun and sabre stroke,
    Hurtling their bones, all black with powderous smoke,
  Make a foul Hinnom of his prison home.

Let him live ! dying every day and hour,
His tear-stained eyes let the proud victor lower,
  His right deposed, e'en his renown scarce known ;
His gaolers, with their icy fetters, weigh
That hand grown weary many a day
  With dragging Kings from off their throne.

His conquering fate, he thought, would leave behind
The memory of the race that ruled mankind :
  God came, and quenched his flambeau with a breath,
And to eternal Rome's mock rival leaves
Only the time, the space each man receives,
  To fill the narrow room of death.

The seas shall lave his grave, and men forget !
Within St. Denis did he vainly set
  A marble tomb with gold and sculpture brave ;—
God chose not that the shades of Royalty,
While weeping, neath those sombre walls should see
  His tainting body sleep within their grave.

VI.

How sad the empty cup, how sad the dream begun
In rapturous joy, but changed to terror e'er 'tis done !

Young, we our reason yield to all our hopes allege ;
Older, we loathe the joys which then the spirit sate,
And scan our life, alas ! too late,
From the horizon's further edge.

Thus at the mountain's foot, its vast and towering height [delight ;
Fills the adventurous heart with triumph and
Nor less the aspiring peaks, that time shall ne'er bring low— [shroud,
The woods that, like a cloak, its rocky desert
And all its circling crown of cloud,
That rolls in heaps about its brow.

Climb upwards, and those zones yet unattempted try.
Mid clouds and mists you stray, who thought to find the sky— [seems :
All changed beneath your eye the mountain aspect
'Tis now a gulf, obscured by pine woods old and black,
Where torrents and the thunder's track
Spring from the lightning and the streams.

VII.

Glory's true image here we trace :
First, like a prism bright and fair,
Then, like an expiatory glass,
Its purple hues like blood appear
Now raised on high, now shattered low,
His life a twofold form doth show. .
If we his youth and age recall,
Two records for his life should be—
When young he fashioned victory.
When old he mused upon his fall.

In both these Isles, by fear beguiled,
The fisherman on winter night,
When storm-bred meteors, strange and wild,
O'er the black rocks display their light,
Thinks that he sees the lengthened shade,
By the dark warrior captain made,
With its arms crossed, unmoved remain ;
And fables that the unquiet soul
Will now the dreadful storms control,
As erst he ruled the battle plain.

VIII.

If he an empire lost, two countries he shall own,
Glorious and shameful made, by his repute alone :—
One, where his breath he drew, the other, where he died ;
And none shall speak the name which shall illustrious make
The age, but with the word he must two echoes wake,
Which half the earth's globe doth divide.

Thus charged with hundred deaths, what time the fiery shell
On the black sky describes its blazing course and fell,
And balanced in the air, hangs o'er the frighted walls ;
And then, to vulture dread with cruel talons like,
That with its mighty wing upon the earth doth strike—
With wreck and ruin loud it falls.

After its fall long time we see dark vapours still,
The loud black throat of its vast mortar fill
(Whence mounted but to fall the globe of ponderous flight) ;

And where at last the shell in fragments dashed about,
Died while disgorging death from its dark entrails out,
And belching flames sank into night.

July 1825.

EPITAPH.

OR old or young, or fool or wise,
You, like a cloud, who roam from skies to skies
At pleasure's instinct, or the call of need,
Why needless should you further speed?
Think you, not here your journey's limit lies?

Death, that o'er all his conquering foot doth place,
My splendour hides with vengeful shade,
Does e'en my name with spiteful veil efface;
So that no more your curious eye can trace,
If midst my void your glories are displayed.

Wanderer! like thee, I wandered on;
The stream flowed back to vanish at its source.
In silence rest thee on this broken stone,
Lay down awhile the weight that slacks thy course:
I once a fardel had, and laid it down.

Would you repose? and is it shade you crave?
Prepared your couch! no noise to make you fear;
If your frail bark is tossed on cloudy wave,
Come! here the rock,—come, for the port is here.

Dost thou feel nothing here thy soul to thrill,
  Nought that surrounds thy feet with mystic spell?
Upon the home that claims thee still,
  Do not thy name mysterious letters tell?

Each man a short-lived player, who scarce can learn
  His part, or drunk with joy, or chill with fright,
  In robe of king, or robe of beggar dight,
Takes for an hour upon the stage his turn.

Stamp not with heedless foot upon the dead;
  Their city you, like me, must dwell beneath.
Men, day by day, are pale and dying sped;
  You cannot tell what hour shall bring your death

Yet in my sight your heart is void of fear;
  What then? you breathe no prayer, you heave no sigh!
My nothingness appeals, you lend no ear!
  You pass! 'Tis well: what can this stone imply?
What hides the tomb, that should extort a tear?
  Some dust it may, or some dry bones supply,
  Nought haply, . . . and eternity.

1823.

IN THE VALLEY OF CHERIZY.

A WANDERER sits 'neath your still shade awhile,
  Fair valley, sad and lone, and, musing, sees
Bird chasing bird, the pool that toads defile,
  And the reed shaken by the breeze!

Man, too, flees Man, and oft in early age
Ills glide into the brave pure heart, and sour ;
Blest the weak flag that 'neath the tempest's rage
Is quickly broken with its flower.

O Valley ! for that storm the wanderer prays,
Aweary of his course, while still delays
The term that all his woes shall end.
Before his steps he sees (some hope to lend)
By the funereal morning's cloudy rays,
The future's waste extend.

From grief to grief he drags life's galling chain.
What cares he for the toys pride reckons gain ?
He seeks some loving heart, some pitying eye
In vain ! His path no help has level made.
'Mid mortals, none will laugh when he is glad,
None at his tears will cry !

His lot desertion, and his life alone,
Like the black cypress in the valley grown.—
The virgin lily far from him expands.
Never to deck his leafless shade shall twine
A young and lovely vine,
And wreathe his sombre boughs with festive bands.

Before he climbs the mountain rude,
The pilgrim seeks the vale for short relief ;
There only silence answers to his grief.
Lone midst the crowd, with him sweet solitude
Dwells, of all friends the chief.

Lonely like him, but more than he at peace,
Glad shelters, lawns, and trees,

Preserve the wretch from every human gaze.
To him streams yield your banks, and waters mild,
Whose feet the mire from out their towns defiled,
And dust from off their ways!

Ah! let him sing consoled beneath your shade,
That vision e'en to darkest days displayed,
The maid with brows so pure, and smiles so bright;
And if earth's short-lived marriage, fate denies,
Still let the dream his deathless soul delight,
Of union past the grave, that time defies.

His thoughts unfettered are by earthly chain;
Glad hope displaces mournful memory;
Two shades henceforward o'er his life shall reign—
One in the past, one in futurity.

When wilt thou come? What God shall bring thee near,
Sweet soul! to him for whom thy pity grieves?
Kind star! when will thy light appear
Like a new Sun to those whom fate bereaves?

He ne'er will gain thee, dear and noble prize,
At cost of virtues that all else transcend.
At the wind's will the reed prostrated lies;—
He, like the giant oak that storm defies,
May break, but never bend.

She comes! he sees her, and without a fear.—
Farewell pure streams, and grassy down,
Fair vale, whose echoes to each sigh we hear,
And woods where sorrow may in peace be borne

Happy who can mid some lone vale repose,
In his own cot be born, and live, and die;
Of earth he nothing knows,
And only sees the sky.

July 1824.

TO A YOUNG GIRL.

YOU, who not yet can childhood's beauty tell—
Child! envy not our grief-encumber'd years,
When hearts are now enslaved, and now rebel,
When laughter oft is sadder than your tears.

So sweet your careless age—its memories fade,
It passes like a breath upon the breeze,
Like a glad voice by distance weaker made,
Or like a halcyon on the seas.

O hasten not to force your artless mind;
Enjoy the morn, enjoy life's vernal prime;
Your days are flowers, one to the other twined—
Pluck not the leaves before the hand of Time.

Let the years flow—like ours will be your lot,
To know regrets and friendship's hollow ties,
Grief without hope that pride avouches not,
And pleasures we despise.

Yes, laugh, unknowing that your mirth will cease;
Laugh, nor your lovely brow with sorrow shade
Your blue eyes, glass of innocence and peace,
Where beams your soul with heavenly radiance glad.

February 1825.

THE JOURNEY.

I.

THE horse his harness shakes, and makes it ring,
The wheels bright sparks from out the pavement fling ;
Now I must go ! Good-bye ; chase from your mind
All bitter fears—take heart—good-bye again.
What ! the car starts—I go, and you remain ?
Alas, I thought you left by chance behind.

Long time pursue it with attentive ear,
Go not away till sick and sad you hear
The clatter of the horse hoofs fade and die ;
E'en now we're hid by intervening space,
Your snowy dress I can no longer trace,
Nor you the wheels distinguish as they fly.

What ! left not e'en a sound, not e'en a shade !
Absence its might upon my soul has laid ;
In deeper gloom I plunge each step I drive,
And in this hell, so full of bitter pain,
Of anguish, idle pangs, chimeras vain,
I buried am, and sink, and roam alive.

II.

What now am I to do with every thought ?
What with my brow, used to thy hand's support ?
What do with all I hear, and all I see,
With illness wanting you, so hard to bear ;
With eyes which by your own illumined were,
And voice which only served to answer thee ?

Upon each roadside tree my sight abides,
That now appears, now into shadow glides,
Green woods, and harvests with their store of gold,
And mountains, and the sparkling evening star,
And the shrill clocks, and cities that afar
Grey lines of mist in the horizon fold.

What boot green woods, the harvest hills, and vines?
And what the star that rises and declines,
And plains and mountains, if to thee not shown?
What profit castles and their ruined halls,
And moss-grown keep, unless their vacant halls
Hear thy light footsteps run beside my own?

While thus the next, and still the next day fly,
Without thee I must see dawn wake and die,
Without thyself, thy smile, thy look so gay.
Musing, I hear thee not beside me tread,
Nor feel thy small soft hand, when raised my head,
Closing my waking eyes in play.

Yet must I send thee, though to grief a prey,
Some written happiness from day to day;
Say, "Cheer thee up! my calm is now restored,"
Whilst for my absent love I ever quail,
And fancying thousand ills thy life assail:
Each hour above my head is hung a sword.

III.

What dost thou now? Beside the hearth, no doubt,
The map is spread, your eye pursues my route;
You say, "Where is he? may each place supply
Kind service, and some heart that loves and cares—
Some hostess like myself, who prays and fears
For some loved being 'neath a foreign sky.

"Now fast he journeys on. I'm sure by now
That far-off city he has travelled through,
That wood, that bridge, scene of some mighty deed;
E'en now he may through that lone valley stray,
Marked by the fatal Cross, that speaks dismay,
Where but last year—— O, may he safely speed!"

And then my Father wipes your sparkling tear,
And, smiling, bids you coax your daughter dear.
"Cheer up! he soon again will see us all—
He laughs, is happy, does this moment trace
Some ancient hero's tomb or dwelling place,
Does for your safety at some altar call."

IV.

Then the old warrior, whom your grief subdues,
Tells his wild life, and battlefields reviews,
Those ancient fights in Italy and Spain,
That Chief who wont the world in awe to keep;—
Lowering his voice lest he should rouse from sleep
The babe upon thy gentle bosom lain.

1825.

DREAMS.

FAR from the city's pile,
Far from the kingly court,
Far from Rank's envious smile,
Far from the Rabble vile,
There, friends, be my resort.

Amid the fields that teach
Calm wisdom to the mind,

Or by some silent beach,
Where from the world can reach
Neither the wave nor wind.

Some shelter lone and hoar,
Some refuge still and old,
Some port beside the shore,
Some nest the leaves stretch o'er,
Some house the woods enfold.

Let it be dark and sad,
And calm and wrapt in sleep,
With forest mantle clad,
In the silence and the shade,
Hid in recesses deep.

There above everything,
Faithful to every tie,
My muse shall stretch her wing,
And now of flowers sing,
And now of mountains high.

And shall her daring fire,
Loose from all shackles be ;
Her flight shall never tire,
But higher soar and higher,
As a wild bird set free.

II.

Let me in dreams ascend
To heavens of love and shade,
And let them never end,
But night the vision lend,
That in the day was made.

And white as is the sail
I through the distance see
Let it a starbeam pale
Disclose, to be a veil
Between my life and me.

And let the Muse still haste,
All bright my night to make,
And gild and make it last,
And from the vision vast,
Be fearful to awake.

Let all my thoughts be there,
In their best beauty found;
And sit with zealous care,
A choir all bright and rare,
Circling my hearth around.

And to my dream enchained,
Let them, with raptured eye,
Above its cradle bend,
As elder sisters tend
Their infant brother by.

III.

Faith dwells upon the seas,
And in the forests high,
There we can breathe at ease;
No crushing weight have these,
To keep us from the sky.

There all is like a dream,
Each sound some truth avows;

All speak, and singing seem,
On the bank from out the stream,
From the wind among the boughs.

It is a voice profound,
Creation's total song ;
It is the Globe's vast sound,
The world as it turns round
The heavenly space along.

It is the Echo grand,
Wherein God's voice we know—
Hymn of the Seraph band,
Of the world calm and bland,
Where go all doomed to go.

Where can no cries affright,
Where sobs and tears withstood,
Soul does with soul unite,
As light is mixed with light,
And flood unites to flood.

IV.

There sounds sublime shall sweep
Each solitude along ;
Paris, in folly's sleep,
'Stead of these tongues that weep,
Gives us an idle song.

Oh ! ancient Brittany,
Oh ! for your foam-dashed beach,
Your Celtic forests high,
With Gothic castles nigh—
Only I would beseech

That my old feudal tower,
Where I shall make my nest,
Hoar castellane of power,—
With ivy crown embower
Its rugged granite crest.

And I would have descried
Some scutcheon to admire,
Upon the chimney wide,
Whose furnace to provide
An oak is set on fire.

In summer, hedges tall
Must shade from heaven's rays;
In winter, we must all
Sit round the lighted hall,
Red with a mighty blaze.

In the woods my kingly range,
When sounds pervade the night,
Their tops shall seem to change
To phantoms weird and strange,
And wage mysterious fight.

Let virgins round me press,
Bright swarms, the heavens that fill,
All clad in loveliness;
Waving their flowing dress
Through the night watches still.

And with a voice of woe,
The ghost of Knight and Lord
Shall through the forest go,
Pale, ghastly—to and fro—
Or darkly stalk abroad.

V.

If my muse rapt on high
Carries its treasured nest
And wingèd family
To ruined keep—once by
Some Baron bold possessed ;

'Tis that those times I love,
Brighter, if not more good,
Than those in which we move ;
And their wild records prove
Dear to the Poet's mood.

The swallow on the tower,
Seeking from flight to rest,
Saved from the tempest's power,
Has sometimes made her bower
In some old vulture's nest.

Where, with soft beak, her young
Within the nest at play.
Oft push (the moss among)
Some broken egg along,
Left by the bird of prey.

Mid arms of by-gone years,
My muse, in Fairy realm,
Mid ancient pikes and spears,
Strange as a dwarf appears,
Wearing a giant's helm.

VI.

Thus in the fields shall pass
My green and happy hours;
In the castle's stately mass,
Like a stray root of grass,
In the breaches of old towers.

But cot, or tower of might,
The world shall bind me not;
I will live in the light,
In prayer and fancy bright,
Forgetting and forgot.

June 1828.

From SONGS FROM THE EAST.

1829.

[In his preface to *Les Orientales* the poet speaks thus about its origin :—"If any one asks the author what is the use of the *Orientales?* what put it into his head to go travelling about the East through a whole volume? what is the purpose of this useless book of mere poetry, thrown out in a time of great public interest, and at the opening of a session? how it can be timely? what "l'Orient" rhymes to?—he will answer, he knows nothing about it; that the fancy took him, and took him in rather an odd manner, whilst last summer he was watching a sunset. He only wishes the book was better, . . . Moreover, as a poet (if the assumption of this title for once will be forgiven) he has always had the most lively sympathy with the East; he thought he there perceived far off, the splendour of much lofty poetry. It is a spring at which he had long wished to quench his thirst. There, in truth, all is great, rich, fruitful, as in the middle ages was that other great ocean of poetry. And this brings him to say—and why should he not say it?—that far too much attention has been paid to the time of Louis XIV. in considering modern epochs, and to Greece and Rome in considering antiquity. He asks whether a wider and loftier view would not be obtained by studying the modern epoch through the middle ages, and antiquity through the East." And he adds, in a somewhat prophetic vein, "for empires, as well as for literature, before long, the East may be called on to play a great part in the West. We shall see great things."]

January 1829.

THE VEIL.

THE SISTER.

WHY, brother, why upon me stare?
Why do your brows so fiercely lower?
Your eyes like funeral torches glare,
Beneath their gloomy looks I cower.
Why do I see your sashes rent?
Why have you thrice your fingers laid
Upon the sheath? What dire intent
Makes you half draw the glittering blade?

FIRST BROTHER.

Raised you to-day your veil, and face displayed?

SISTER.

Home from the bath my path I took—
Brothers! look not so terribly!—
And I was hidden from the look
Of every unbeliever's eye.
But as the Mosque I hurried by,
Close covered in my palanquin,
Stifled beneath the mid-day sky,
I loosed my veil to breathe between.

SECOND BROTHER.

Did not a man then pass in Caftan green?

SISTER.

Ah, yes, perhaps it may be so;
But he ne'er saw my face. My brother,

Together you are whispering low—
  What whisper you to one another?
You would not kill me? On your soul
  He saw me not! My oath believe!
Have mercy! Your blind rage control!
  Your poor young sister, O reprieve!

THIRD BROTHER.

Blood-red I saw the sun sink down at eve.

SISTER.

Mercy, O mercy! Brothers, cease,
  Your daggers stab me to the heart!
Brothers! I cling about your knees!
  O veil! white veil! the cause thou art!
Brothers! your dying sister prop,
  Tear not my bleeding hand away—
Darkness comes o'er me—with me stop—
  The veil of death shuts out the day.

FOURTH BROTHER.

Unlifted by your hands this veil will stay.

September 1825.

THE CORN-FLOWERS.

IN Summer months, while yet the corn
Is by the scentless star-flower filled,
And furrows which the harvests gild,
Their blue enamelled gems adorn ;
Ere shorn the blossoms bright and sweet,
The fields beneath the sickle lie,
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

In Andalusia not a town
Can ancient Penafiel surpass
For wealth of fertile glebe and grass—
For rural beauty and renown,
Not one that over wall and street,
Can prouder fortresses supply.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

No Christian city can you name,
No belfried convent can be shown
Which Father Pope or monarch own,
Where to St. Ambrose shrine of fame,
More holy sun-scorched pilgrims meet,
With staff, and shell, and rosary.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And pick the corn-flowers in the wheat.

And in no land the maiden choir,
At evening when the dance they tread,
Have brows more rosy-garlanded—
Have hearts more filled with hidden fire ;
'Neath the mantilla's folds discreet,

Nowhere shines brighter, softer eye.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And pick the corn-flowers in the wheat.

And Andalusia's fairest pearl,
Alice, belonged to Penafiel,
Whom bees, to fill their honeyed cell,
Would choose, confusing flower and girl.
Her happy days, alas! were fleet—
The idol of her family.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

Chance to the town a stranger led,
Young, with a haughty mien and word.
Was he a Moorish prince or lord,
From Murcia or from Seville sped—
Or from the desert sought retreat,
Where Tunis' ships at anchor lie?
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

They knew not.—Alice, simple maid,
Was loved, and then she loved again;
And so Xarama's blooming plain
Beheld her won, and then betrayed.
The twain at eve, with lingering feet,
Wandered beneath the starry sky.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And pick the corn-flowers in the wheat.

'Twas dark, the city far away;
The moon, which ever favours love,
Rose sleepily the towers above
And belfries, in the twilight grey,

And fret-work seemed to counterfeit
Against the black clouds floating by.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And pick the corn-flowers in the wheat.

While jealous looks on Alice glance,
Wondering who might the stranger be,
Beneath the silk and orange tree
The Andalusian maidens dance ;
Horn and guitar in concert meet,
And urge to dancing merrily.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

The bird sleeps in its mossy nest,
While hovers the fierce hawk above ;
So slumbers Alice in her love,
By ne'er a fear or doubt opprest.
The King !—Don Juan !—Ah ! deceit—
Was the fair youth with azure eye.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

To love a Prince brings peril sore !
One day upon a coal black steed
They threw her—so the king decreed,
And from her home and country bore ;
The cloister walls her sad retreat,
Doomed by the king's authority.
Away, away, young maidens hie,
And gather corn-flowers in the wheat.

April 1828.

PHANTOMS.

I.

ALAS! how many maidens fade and die
I've seen. Hard fate! yet death must have his prey.
The grass beneath the mower's scythe must lie,
And frolic dancers, gaily floating by,
Must crush the roses in their way.

Streams flowing through the valleys must be lost;
The lightning's sheen a short-lived course must wing;
And needs must April mar with jealous frost
The apple trees, that star-like blossoms boast—
The fragrant snow-flakes of the Spring.

Yes, such is life: wan night the day doth chase,
Then comes the wakening hell or paradise.
At the great banquet crowds fill every place,
But many guests soon have an empty space,
And long before the close arise.

II.

How have I seen them die!—one rose and white;
One seemed on heavenly sympathies intent;
Another drooped, too frail to stand upright,
And as the bough bends when the bird takes flight,
Her body by her soul was rent.

One pale distraught, and full of fancies wild,
Low whispering, spake a name which no one knew;
One glided off as music soft and mild,
And one, as she was dying, sweetly smiled,
As though an angel homeward flew.

All fragile blossoms, dead as soon as born—
Halcyons o'er whom the sea its billows flings—
Doves sent by heaven for life's briefest morn,
Whom did grace, beauty, childhood, love adorn,
Whose years are counted by the springs!

Sweet shades! while in the gloom I dream and stray,
They come, they hear me speak, they give replies;
Their numbers seen and lost in darkening day,
And through the veil of boughs and leafy spray
I see once more their sparkling eyes.

Their spirits own my soul's affinity,
And life and death with us commingled be;
Their steps I help, or with their wings I fly.
Transcendent vision! now like them I die,
And then once more they live like me.

So tranced, to all my thoughts their forms they bend;
I see, I see them come, I hear them call!
Then dancing round a tomb, their figures blend,
Then slowly fading from my sight they wend,
And musing, I remember all.

III.

One above all, an angel girl of Spain—
White hands, a breast no sighs unholy swell,
Black eyes, where did the South's bright langour reign—
That untold charm and halo which pertain
To brows which fifteen summers tell.

No, it was not of love she died! for her
Love as yet kindled neither joy nor woe;
Her heart as yet thrilled with no loving care,
And while all cried aloud that she was fair,
None the same whispered to her low.

Balls caused her death : with eager, boundless love,
Balls—dazzling balls—filled her with ecstasies;
And now her ashes thrill and gently move,
When, in a balmy night, white clouds above
Dance round the crescent of the skies.

Balls her delight ! too dearly loved and sought !
Of them, for days before, she thinks and dreams;
Women, musicians, dancers, stopt by nought,
Come in her sleep, following each girlish thought,
And round her bed the revel streams.

Then all for jewels, trinkets, necklaces,
Sashes, and watered silks of blended ray—
Tissues more airy than the wings of bees—
Wreaths, ribbons, and whate'er the child can please,
And flowers a palace might display.

The *fête* began. She, with her sisters, laughs
And hastes; her fan she flutters 'neath her hand;
Then, sitting down amid the silken scarfs,
Her bounding heart the joyous music quaffs,
Poured from the vast melodious band.

She was all dance, and laughter, and delight.
Dear child, she brightened our sad idleness;
For 'tis not at a ball all hearts are bright—
Ashes round silken tunics wing their flight,
And pleasure yields to weariness.

But she, in the delirious waltz borne round,
Flew by, and then returned, breathless and fleet,
Intoxicated with the flute's soft sound,
The magic *fête*, where lights and flowers abound,
And noise of voices and of feet.

What joy to bound distracted in the crowd !
To feel in dance the senses multiplied !
Scarce knowing if you float upon a cloud,
Or chase the flying earth, or, new endowed,
You tread some fast-revolving tide !

Alas ! she had to quit when dawn displayed
Its light, and wait, exposed, her cloak to find.
How often thus the giddy, thoughtless maid
Feels, shivering, on her naked shoulders laid,
The cold blast of a chilling wind !

What dismal morrows on the ball ensue ! [whim !
Farewell child-laughter, dance, and dress, and
To song succeeds the cough that pierces through,
To rose and white, the fever's livid hue,
To star-bright eyes—eyes quenched and dim.

Dead at fifteen !—loved, lovely, happy, gay,
Leaving the ball ; long, long to make us weep.
Dead ! from her frenzied mother torn away
By Death's cold clutch ; e'en in her ball array,
And in a coffin put to sleep.

Decked was she ready for another ball ;
Death was so eager such a prize to have,
Roses which garlanded her brows withal,
And bloomed on her at yester festival,
Were scarcely faded on her grave.

Poor mother ! unforeseeing destiny,
On such weak reed, such weight of love to heap ;
Watching so long on her frail infancy,
So many nights have sat her cradle by,
And kissed her darling's tears to sleep.

And all for what? If now the loved, lost maid,
Coffined, and food for worms (ah! dismal sight!)
Within the tomb, where we her beauty laid,
Is wakened by some revel of the dead,
On a clear moonlit winter night;

A grinning spectre tends her toilette wan
In mother's stead, and cries, "'Tis time to haste;"
An icy kiss prints her blue lips upon,
And the gaunt fingers of the skeleton
'Mid her long floating tresses placed;

Then leads her trembling to the ghastly dance,
Where phantoms whirl in mazes through the gloom;—
The great pale moon stares down as in a trance,
And the night rainbow, through the sky's expanse,
Stains the grey clouds that dimly loom.

IV.

Young girls, whom balls and frolic *fêtes* allure,
Think on this Spanish maid with pensive ruth;
With rapturous hand she hastened to procure
Harvest of all life's roses, sweet and pure—
Affection, pleasure, beauty, youth.

From *fête* to *fête* the luckless child they took,
As of that nosegay all the hues she tried.
Alas! this life how quickly she forsook,
And, like Ophelia, carried by the brook,
While she was gathering flowers, died.

April 1828.

EXTASY.

I WAS alone beside the sea, upon a starry night,
And not a cloud was in the sky, and not a sail in sight;
Beyond the limits of the world far stretched my raptured eye,
And the forests and the mountains, and nature all around,
Seemed to unite in questioning, in vast and mingled sound,
The billows of the ocean, and the splendour of the sky.

And the golden stars of heaven, in their unnumbered crowd,
With harmonies ten thousand, with voices clear and loud,
Replied, as low they bended down their radiant crowns of flame—
And the blue floods that nought has power to govern or arrest,
Replied, as low they bended down, the foam upon their crest—
"The Lord, our great Creator, His glory we proclaim!"

November 1828.

From AUTUMN LEAVES.

1831.

[In the preface to the first edition of *Feuilles d'Automne*, dated November 1831, we find the following words:—"No one denies that the political situation at the present moment is very serious, and the author less than anyone. Within—the old solutions of social problems are all called in question; all parts of the body politic are displaced, re-cast, and re-forged in the furnace of a revolution on the resounding anvil of the public press. . . . Abroad are heard the hollow sounds emitted by revolutions, while still in embryo, pushing beneath every European kingdom their underground galleries, ramifications of the great central revolution, of which Paris is the crater. In short, without, as within, beliefs in dispute, consciences in travail, new religions (a serious matter), springing up, stammering formulas partly bad and partly good, old religions adopting new forms. Rome, the city of faith, meaning perhaps to reform itself up to the level of Paris, the city of intelligence, theories, fancies, systems, everywhere at odds with truth, the problem of the future already explored and sounded as that of the past. Such is the state to which we have arrived in this month of November 1831."]

From "PRAYER FOR ALL."

I.

MY daughter, go and pray—the night draws near,
Through clouds a golden planet doth appear,
The outline of the hills now fades away ;
In shade the waggon scarce seems moving.—Hark !
All things seek rest, trees that the roadway mark,
Stirred by the wind, shake off the dust of day.

Twilight, that opes the curtains of the night,
Makes sparkle every star with ardent light ;
The west contracts its fringe of crimson glow,
Night silvers o'er the water steeped in shade,
Furrows, paths, bushes, all commix and fade—
The traveller hesitates which way to go.

Day is for evil, hate, fatigue, and harm.
Pray ! Night is come—Night that is grave and calm.
Old herdsmen, blasts that through torn turrets rove,
The lakes, the flocks, with shrill discordant call,
All suffer, all complain in Nature, all
Have need of sleep, have need of prayer and love.

Children with angels at this hour renew
Sweet speech, while we our strange delights pursue ;
All little children, eyes upraised to heaven,
Kneeling upon the floor, hands-clasped, feet bare,
At the same hour, and in the self-same prayer,
Ask the All-father we may be forgiven.

And next they sleep—then in their dim recess
Bright golden dreams, swarms eager, numberless ;
Born when day's tumults yield at last to night,

Seeing from far their breath, each rosy lip,
As bees their quest pursue sweet flowers to sip,
Shall settle on their curtains pure and white.

Sleep of the cradle ! prayer of Infancy !
Voice which age fondles—never brings a sigh ;
Sweet piety, that joy and laughter steep,
Prelude of nightly songs the angels bring.
As the bird hides its head beneath its wing,
The child in prayer puts its young soul to sleep.

II.

My daughter, go and pray ! and for her first,
Who oft has rocked thee long nights through and nursed ;
Whose gift thou wast from Heaven, that gives us all—
Who gave thee birth, and reared with tenderest care,
And making of this life a double share,
Gave thee the honey, drank herself the gall.

Next, pray for me ; I need it more than she,
Who, good, true, faithful, has aye been like thee.
She has the guileless heart that brings repose,
Her pity large, envy ne'er stained her life ;—
Wise, gentle, kind, her days devoid of strife,
She suffers wrong, yet knows not whence it flows.

But I life better know, and much can say,
When you have grown, and reached instruction's day,
That empire to pursue, and art, and fame,
Is worthless folly, and that fortune's urn
Oft stead of glory doth disgrace return,
And oft his soul is lost who joins the game.

Passing through life the soul grows worse, although
The end of all, we see, the causes know;
Yet old, by vice and error are subdued:
We doubt, and from the right go far astray.
All something leave on brambles by the way—
Flocks leave their fleece, and man his rectitude.

Go, then, and pray for me, with earnest heart.
Say, Lord, Thou Lord my God our Father art,
Have pity! Thou alone art good and great.
Let thy words flow just where thy soul doth send;
Care not, all things in their own fashion wend;
Fear not, kind answer shall thy words await.

All things the point their nature seeks, do reach:
The stream, though wandering long, attains the beach;
Bees do the blossoms know whence sweets are given;
All wings towards their own right aim are led—
Eagles the sun, and vultures seek the dead,
Swallows the spring, thy prayers mount up to heaven.

When for my sake your voice flies up to God,
I'm like a slave, who, resting on a sod,
His burden thrown on margin of the road,
I lighter feel, for all this weight of pain,
Of faults and sins that I with anguish train;
Your prayer relieves me of the dreadful load.

Pray for me, that I yet may worthy be
Some swan-winged angel's flight in dreams to see,
So that my soul shall like a censer glow;
Blot out my sins beneath thy breath divine,
So that my heart may fair and blameless shine,
As altar steps that pure unsullied show.

III.

Pray for all those who, living, tread
  This earth, and in the world we find ;
For those whose path is lost and dead,
  By every wave and every wind ;
For the mad hearts that fix their joy
In silken dress or gaudy toy,
  Or in the swiftness of a horse ;
For all who toil and suffer woe,
If thence they come, or thither go,
  Or if they better do, or worse.

For him whom shameful pleasures soil
  The livelong night, from eve to morn ;
Who makes the hours of prayer his spoil,
  For balls and feasts, of folly born,
And ribald songs in orgies trolls,
At that still hour when pious souls
  Repeat their hymns with zealous care ;
And, when the prayer is done and said,
Cease not, as if they were afraid
  That God might not have heard their prayer.

Prayers, child ! for the veiled virgins say,
  And for the captive in his gaol,
And for abandoned women pray,
  Who make of love a shameless sale ;
For those who dream and meditate,
For impious fools, who early, late,
  Pour curses forth, and blasphemy.
Prayer's might no limit can receive ;
You for the infidel believe,
  For infancy doth faith imply.

And pray for those the grave doth hide,
Who sleep beneath their marble shroud—
The grave ! black gulf that opens wide
At every moment 'neath the crowd !—
For all those souls that wretched be
Have need that you should set them free
From the old rust the body bred ;
Though speechless, do they suffer less ?
Child ! look within the tomb's recess—
You must have pity on the dead !

IV.

Kneel, kneel, my child, kneel down upon the ground
Which o'er your parents' parents forms a mound,
Where all who come are wrapt in soundest sleep—
Abyss where mortal dust is heaped on dust,
And where are fathers on their fathers thrust,
As waves on waves in the unfathomed deep.

You laugh while sleeping, swarms of dreams invade,
And whirl and frolic round your restful shade,
Start at your breathing, then return once more.
You open then those eyes which I so love,
While dawn, itself the eye of heaven above,
Opens its long-lashed lids gold-tinted o'er.

But they ! Ah, did you know what sleep death owns,
Their beds, how cold and heavy crush their bones !
For them no Angels joyous hymns impart,
Dreams of the past their evil deeds enforce,
Dawnless their night, implacable remorse,
Changed to the ruthless grave-worm, knaws their heart.

Child ! you can, with a word, the while you pray,
Make their remorse take wing and fly away,

That some soft cheering warmth their bones shall find,
That some glad ray shall reach their raptured sight,
That somewhat they shall feel of life and light
Something of the fresh woods and streams and wind.

Say, when you wandered, pensive, though so young,
And listened to the billows' plaintive song,
Or, 'neath the awful gloom of forest tree,
Amid the winds' and waves' appealing sigh,
Have you not sometimes heard a faint voice cry,
Child, when you pray, will you not pray for me?

The dead thus plead—the dead for whom you pray
Find their still bed a fresher green display,
And on their souls heaven's far-off music falls;
But those whom we forget have night more black,
And in their coffins ceaseless worms attack,
And shriek of osprey greets their festivals.

Pray so that fathers, uncles, elder kin,
Who ask for nothing but your prayers to win,
May, when you name them, in their coffins thrill,
Knowing they still remembered are on earth;
And as the furrow feels the flowers' birth,
Shall feel their hollow eyes a tear-drop fill.

V.

'Tis not for me, my Dove! to pray
For all inhabitants of earth,
For all whose faith has gone astray,
For those the grave has snatched away—
The grave which gives the altar birth.

Would not my prayers, deformed and vain,
And void of faith and holy deed,
For others' sins unheard remain,
When, worthless pardon to attain,
O Lord! when for myself I plead?

Ah, no! If for this world of wrong
Can any soul with profit pray,
'Tis thou, whose voice is holy song;
You, for your prayers are pure and strong—
You, child! another's debt can pay.

For those whom vice has captive led
Children may watch, and God beseech;
They are sweet flowers that perfume shed—
Censers that sacred incense spread—
Their blameless word the heavens reach.

Be thou with their pure voice content;
Upon their knees let children fall.
We all have crimes that we lament,
All o'er the dread abyss are lent—
'Tis children who must pray for all.

VI.

Child, give thy prayers as alms, a priceless store,
To father, mother, kin long gone before—
To rich, whose riches yet no joys afford,
To poor, to widows, to the vile and base;
All sin and suffering let thy prayers embrace,
Give to the dead, e'en give them to the Lord.

You ask, for the last word your faith alarms,
What? to the Lord most high?—can He need alms?
Holy of holies, and of kings the King,

Of myriad suns He makes His dazzling train,
And laws and limits gives the raging main—
The All-in-All supreme o'er everything !

When you and your two brothers all the day,
In your glad home beside the hedgerows play,
So tired at eve you scarce can keep your seat,
You need sweet milk, and apples, nuts, and bread ;
And kissing turn by turn each little head,
Your mother kneels to bathe your weary feet.

Well, there is One, who 'mid the human throng,
Walks in this world of ours the whole day long,
For ever helping all by deed and word ;
Who, a good shepherd, saves the wandering sheep,
The Pilgrim speeding on o'er depth and steep—
This Shepherd, Pilgrim, Traveller, is the Lord.

Weary and worn at eve, to smile he needs
A child to pray to him—a soul that heeds
And loves—Thou, Child ! devoid of fraud and ill,
Bring Him your heart with innocence replete,
E'en as you would a vase ; with trembling feet,
Fearing one single priceless drop to spill.

Bring Him your heart, and when a mystic flame,
Burning in your young spirit, shall proclaim
His holy presence near you, O my sweet,
My precious child ! fear not contempt, but pour,
As Mary, Martha's sister did of yore,
Pour all your perfume on the Saviour's feet.

November 1831.

WHAT CARES MY HEART.

WHAT cares my heart about these births of kings,
These victories, whose fame together brings
Bell-peals and cannon's roar !
Which prayers with pompous ceremonial make,
And where by night, in cities kept awake,
The star-like rockets soar.

Elsewhere direct your eyes to God alone !
In all below man's vanity is shown :
Fame flees, and ne'er can rest,
Gold crowns and mitres shine, but quickly pass,
And are not worth (God's gift) one blade of grass,
Made for the linnet's nest.

Pomp, howe'er grand, is nought but vanity :
The bomb-shell sooner strikes the column high
Than cots which pigeons have.
Confirmed to God, by death alone, are kings ;
Always a cross from their crown's summit springs,
Their tombs His temple pave.

What ! our high towers—our gorgeous palaces—
Mahomet, Napoleon, Cæsar, Pericles—
Time all that is destroys !
Mysterious gulf ! at which the spirit quails—
Deep silence just beneath the earth prevails,
The surface full of noise !

June 1830.

WHAT IS HEARD ON THE MOUNTAIN.

SILENT and calm, have you e'er scaled the height
Of some lone mountain peak, in heaven's sight?
Was it beside the Sund, or Breton shore,
Where ocean stretched the mountain's feet before?
Bent o'er the deep and boundless space, to hear—
Silent and calm—have you inclined your ear?

'Tis this we hear—at least, in dreams, one day
My thought did on the strand its pinions stay,
And from a beetling cliff, on either hand
Gazed on the ocean world, and bounding land,
I listened, heard, and such a voice did ne'er,
From such a mouth, strike upon mortal ear!

First, 'twas a voice, immense, vast, undefined,
More vague than through the forest sounds the wind;
Full of harsh notes—soft murmurs, full of charms,
Sweet as night music, strong as clash of arms,
When squadrons meet in furious fight, and fast,
While the loud clarions blow their fatal blast.

Music it was, ineffable and deep, [sweep,
Which vibrates, flows, and round the world doth
And in the skies immense, its waves make young,
In large and larger orbits rolls along;
Till in the depth its billows reach the shade
Where time, space, number, form, are lost and fade.
Like a new atmosphere through space dispersed,
Th' eternal hymn the total globe immersed:
The world, encompassed in that symphony,
As though the air did through that music fly.

Thus by th' eternal harps thought-bound, I stood,
Lost in the voice as in the ocean's flood.

Soon with that voice confusedly combined,
Two other voices, vague and veiled, I find.
The earth, the seas poured forth to heaven their cry,
Which sang the universal harmony,
And seemed each voice, though mixed, distinct
to be,
As two cross currents 'neath a stream you see—
One from the seas, triumphant, blissful song!
Voice of the waves, which talked themselves among;
The other, which from earth to heaven ran,
Was full of sorrow—the complaint of man;
And in this concert, singing night and day,
Each billow had its voice, each man his say.

And, as was said, vast ocean without cease,
Poured forth its voice of happiness and peace;
Songs, as the harps of Sion's temple raised,
The loveliness of all creation praised;
Its sound, borne by the swift-winged winds along,
For ever rose to God—a triumph song:
And all the waves which God alone can tame,
One ending—others still the hymn proclaim.
Like that great lion, whose awe-breathing guest
Was Daniel, oft the sea its roar suppressed,
And when the sun sunk flaming; to behold
God's hands, methought, passed 'neath its mane of
gold.

Yet piercing through this glorious symphony,
The other voice, like a scared courser's cry,
Like rusty hinge of Hell's gate grating, sharp,
Or like a brazen bow on iron harp,

Grinding tears, cries, abuse, and venomed spite,
And fierce denial of each Christian rite,
And maledictions, clamours, blasphemies,
In the tumultuous waves of human cries,
Passed, as at eve in valleys meet the sight,
Flying in flocks, the sable birds of night.
What noise was this, whose echoes widely swept?
Alas! it was the earth and men who wept!

Friend! of these voices twain, whose destiny
Is ever to be born, and ever die,
Whom hears th' Eternal, through eternity:
One—"Nature"—said, and one—"Humanity."

Thus mused I! for my faithful soul had ne'er,
Alas! with bolder pinion cleaved the air;—
Ne'er through my gloom a brighter day had shone.
Long time I dreamed, revolving, one by one,
The abyss, the sea, hid from me, and beside
Th' abyss that in my soul was opened wide.
And much I questioned, why are we here?—The end
Why? whither, after all, all this can tend?
What boots the soul? if best to die, or live?
Why God, who in His book alone can dive,
Joins in the fatal hymn since earth began,
The song of Nature, and the cries of man?

July 1829.

A DAY ON MOUNT ATLAS.

ONCE to Mount Atlas, said the jealous hills:
See our fresh lawns, green meadows, gentle rills,
On whose soft bank young maidens wander free,
And sing and laugh, and dream of what may be.

Our feet doth ocean kiss, threatening no harm—
That savage ocean !—and our summit calm
On which the summer's flame, and dewy showers
Makes burst in fragrant bloom, a crown of flowers.

But thou, grim giant ! why o'er thy bald head
Do eagles ever soar, with eyes of dread ?
Why, like a branch where builds the bird her nest,
Curve thy huge shoulders, and thy granite crest ?
Why fill thy sides abysses, dark in shade,
Where lightnings ever strike, and storms invade ?
Who placed such snows upon thy wrinkled brow—
That brow, which Spring's sweet smile does ne'er allow ?
Why drowned in sweat? thy back why bent and curled ?
Atlas replied, "'Tis I bear up the world."

April 1830.

TO A TRAVELLER.

FRIEND, you return from that wide travelling,
Which ages fast ;—though it may wisdom bring
Our cradle scarcely left.—
Of all the seas of which you ploughed the wave,
Round the whole world you might a girdle have,
By your ship's furrows cleft.

The suns of twenty skies made ripe your life :
Where'er you roamed, with curious longing rife
To scatter and to store,
As husbandmen not only reap but sow,
You took—yet of yourself did part bestow
In lands you travelled o'er.

The while your friend, less wise and fortunate,
Did the unvarying course of months await,
Nor sought beyond to roam ;
But like the tree which marks, while far away,
His door, took root, spreading day after day,
At threshold of his home.

Wishing no more fresh realms of men to scan,
Now you return, tired of the world and man,
Repose in God to gain—
Tired ! all your fruitless travels you relate,
And your feet mix with ashes of my grate
The dust three worlds contain.

Now, your heart filled with meditations deep,
While on my children's head your hands you keep,
We converse, I and you.—
You question me, and ask with painful care,
Where are your father, mother, son ? . . . Ah where
Alas ! they travel too.

The voyage they make has neither moon nor day !
Of all they had, none can take ought away :
Such the Lord's jealousy.
Deep is the voyage they make and limitless !
Slow steps it has, mid looks of wan distress !
This path we all must try.

I was at their departure, and your own ;
All three at different seasons, one by one,
They all have ta'en their flight.
Alas ! deep in the earth, those heads so loved
My treasures ! in that day of grief removed,
I buried out of sight.

I saw them go, and, weak and full of fears,
Thrice have I seen black crape, all stained with tears,
These corridors enfold.
Girl-like, with tears I their cold hands bedewed—
The coffin closed, my soul their soul has viewed—
Expand two wings of gold.

I saw them like three swallows spread their wings,
Who fly far off to find more constant springs,
And summers more serene.
My mother first saw heaven, and took to flight,
And in her dying eyes there shone a light
Elsewhere was never seen.

Lost next my first-born, next my father are—
Proud Veteran, aged by forty years of war,
His breast with stripes aglow.—
Now there are all the three asleep in night,
While their three spirits wend their gloomy flight,
And go where we shall go.

Now when the moon declines, if so you will,
We two will watch through night upon the hill,
Where our forefathers lie;
And I will ask you, while your eyes you keep
On the dead town, and on the town asleep,
Which sleeps most peaceably?

Come! Silent, stretched upon the ground, we twain
Will hear, while Paris shall awhile restrain
Her strife and living coil,
The million dead, Christ's harvest, gently stir,
Springing to life within the sepulchre,
Like seed within the soil.

How many Sisters, Brothers, joyous live,
Who endless tears to some dear shade should give.
Time !—thou all conquering art !
The dead last little ! Leave them 'neath their stones ;
To dust, within their coffins turn their bones
Less soon than in our hearts !

O Traveller ! folly doth our heart beset !
How many dead each hour do we forget—
Most dear, most fair, and brave !
How soon time blunts our sorrow—who can say ?
Or the grass growing but one single day,
Conceals how many a grave ?
1829.

TWO STANZAS ON CHILDREN.

HOW beautiful the child ! its smile how sweet !
Its trust unshaken, voice with charms repleto,
Brief tears soon changed to bliss ;
Gazing around with wondering raptured sight,
The young soul reaching out to life and light,
The lips to meet our kiss.

O Lord, preserve me, and preserve all those
I love—friends, brothers, kin, and e'en my foes
On whom blind fate has smiled—
From seeing summer without flowers arrive,
Cage with no bird, and without bees the hive,
The house without the child.
May 1830.

TO A LADY.

MAIDEN, were I a king, the monarchy
And subject millions I would all resign ;
Power, pomp, and state, and purple luxury,
Armies unmatched, and fleets that sway the sea,
For one kind look of thine.

And were I Jove, I would Olympus' height
Forego, with its eternity of bliss,
My reign o'er gods and men, my thunder's might
Through earth and heaven, Maiden, wouldst thou requite
My passion with a kiss.

May 18—.

From SONGS OF THE TWILIGHT.

1835.

[The poet concludes his preface to *Les Chants du Crépuscule* with this admonition :—" The last word the author has to add is this—viz., that in this age, wholly given up as it is to change and expectation, when discussion is so grievous and uncompromising, so altogether in extremes, that nothing is listened to nowadays, and nothing applauded save the two words 'Yes' and 'No'—he himself is not either among those who deny or those who affirm. He is among those who hope."]

TO THE COLUMN,

TWO STANZAS.

ALAS ! alas ! keep thy lone tomb,
And keep thy barren sea-splashed rock,
Where thou didst dash thee like a bomb,
To fall with fiery smoking shock !
Thy rugged St. Helena keep,
Where, of thy fortune's proudest steep,
The dazed eye sees the sad reverse ;
Keep the still shade thy grave receives,
Beneath thy willow tree, whose leaves,
Are scattered through the universe.

There, free from outrage, dost thou sleep,
And, oft aroused, thou near dost feel
Those who from rage and sorrow weep—
The red-clad soldiers o'er thee kneel.
There thou, if e'er thou earth reseek,
Shalt see from some commanding peak,
Upon the world of waters pale,
Bound for the rocky sea-girt hearth,
As the true centre of the earth,
Ships of each clime, and realm, and sail.

October 9, 1830.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

IF some fragrant lawn be found,
By dews of heaven blest,
Where are seen, the whole year round
Flowers in beauty dressed ;
Where rose, pink, and lilies rare,
All in rich profusion are—
I would make a pathway there
For your foot to rest.

If there be that well can love,
Some devoted breast,
Which all virtue doth approve,
All things base detest ;
If that bosom always beat
To perform heroic feat—
There I find a pillow meet
For your brow to rest.

If a dream of love there be,
By all sweets possest,
Where each fleeting hour we see
Whatsoe'er is best—
Dream, God-hallowed, bright and kind,
Where the soul to soul is joined—
There a shelter would I find
For your heart to rest.

February 18—.

THE POOR FLOWER.

SAID the poor Flower to the Butterfly,
Go not away,
See how perverse our lots—you flee, but I
Must ever stay.

Still, still we love, and without men can be,
And from them far.
We are so much alike, some think that we
Both flowers are.

Alas! air wafts you off; me, earth holds fast,
Ah, cruel fate!
I on thy flight my balmy scent would cast
At heaven's gate.

But no, you roam too far; 'mid countless flowers
You wander fleet;
I lonely watch my shadow, through the hours,
Turn at my feet.

You fly—return—then off again are borne,
To shine elsewhere,
And always do you find me bathed each morn
With many a tear.

That faithful days upon our love may shine,
King of my heart !
Take root like me, or give me wings like thine,
Never to part.

ENVOY.

The tomb must join you, Butterfly and Flower,
Or soon or late ;
Would you together live the present hour,
Say, wherefore wait ?

High in the air, if cradled there you soar
With painted flight ;
'Mid fields, if in the fields your blossoms pour
Their glad delight.

What matters where, if thou be scent or hue,
Bright Butterfly !
Rosebud ! if they be wings or leaves in you
That we descry.

To live together—this, real bliss ! true worth !
And nought beside ;
This safe—or in the skies, or on the earth,
Let chance decide.

September 18—.

SINCE OUR HOURS ARE FULL OF GRIEFS.

SINCE trouble and calamities
Do all our fleeting hours fill,
Since every link affection ties,
On every side is loosened still ;

Since Fathers, Mothers, all are past,
And e'en our children, pretty elves,
Are gone—where we shall follow fast,
And sink to sleep before ourselves.

And since the earth to which you bow,
And which you moisten with your tears,
Has buried all your roots below,
And many a blossom buried bears.

Since with the voice of those we love,
The voice of friends long dead we hear ;
Since mixt with our illusions move
Dim forms of many a former year.

Since in the hours with rapture rife,
We feel some sorrows still remain ;
Since like a goblet is our life,
That we can neither fill nor drain.

And since the more with age we cope,
The deeper in the shade we dwell ;
Since the false flatteries of hope
Have now no further tale to tell.

And since the clock, with 'larum loud,
Nought offers for another day ;
Since none we know among the crowd
Of those we meet upon our way.

From the world's bond your spirit free,
Place not your dreamland here below ;
Your pearl inhabits not our sea,
'Tis not your pathway where we go.

When sombre night all stars doth lack,
Then rock thee on the watery waste,
For she like death is veiled and black,
And it, like life, doth bitter taste.

The night, the deep, have mystery,
Whose secret mortals vainly seek :
'Tis God that bids them silent be,
Till dawns the day when all shall speak.

Yes ! other eyes, of ocean vast
Have vainly tried the depths to sound ;
Others have been with mist o'ercast
While gazing at the skies profound.

Ask night's calm regions to provide
Some solace to thy desert heart,
Refreshment from its still calm tide,
And in its harmonies a part.

Above all other women soar,
And let thy bright eyes range between
The heaven, where happy souls adore,
And earth, where graves are ever seen.

February 18—.

HOPE IN GOD.

HOPE, Child, to-morrow, and to-morrow still,
And every morrow hope ; trust while you live.
Hope ! and each time the dawn doth heaven fill,
Be there to ask, as God is there to give.

Poor Angel ! say, "For sin is sorrow sent :
Perchance, if long I weep on bended knee,
When He has first blessed all the Innocent,
Then all the Contrite, God may end with me"

October 18—.

From THE INNER VOICES.

1837.

[The author in his preface to *Les voix Intérieures* says that these poems are dedicated to his father, Lieutenant-General Joseph Léopold Sigisbert Hugo—and to his father's name he subjoins these words, "Not inscribed on the Arc de l'Etoile;" and he goes on to say, that until this omission is repaired by the country, he himself repairs it, so far as in him lies, by the dedication of this work to his memory.]

THE PAST.

THE pile was of the thirteenth Louis' days;
Red sunset glowed the dismal palace round;
Each far-off window seemed a fiery blaze,
Unseen its shape, hid in a crimson haze,
And in the gleam the lofty roof was drowned.

Stretched 'neath our eyes, its ancient glory flown,
A park where grass o'er every pathway swarms;—
And in some niche with ivy half o'ergrown,
Winter, grim statue! on a grey worn stone,
Her hands above a marble fire warms.

In slumber lay the solitary lake,
Where moulded a gaunt Neptune, green with slime;
Reeds hid the water which the banks did break,
And trees their ancient solemn branches shake,
Where erst did Boileau muse his learned rhyme.

At times you saw stags in the forest range,
Who seemed to linger for the hunter's cry;
And propt, by stumps, white marbles, lost and strange,
Mixed with the hedgerow trees—ignoble change!
Twin sisters—Gabriel, Venus—mourn and sigh.

Cloaks from whose lifted folds long rapiers peep,
No longer in that voiceless garden stood;
The Tritons seem to shut their eyes and sleep;
A cavern its strong jaws doth open keep,
And yawns a-weary in the lonely wood.

And then I said, this palace lone and sad
Held love as bright as in your heart can shine;
Fame, glory, laughter, endless feasting had;
And all those vanished joys now sorrow add,
As vessels rust and blacken from their wine.

Within that cave, where the damp mosses crawl,
Came, with drooped eyes and palpitating heart,
The beauteous Caussade, or the young Candale,
Who of a royal lover, willing thrall,
Said "Sire" on entering, "Louis" when they part.

There, as to-day, for Candale or Caussade,
White fleecy clouds in the blue heaven streamed;
Soft golden rays upon the roof were spread,
A blaze of light was from the windows shed,
And the sun sweetly smiled, and Nature dreamed.

Then, as to-day, two hearts that one became,
Did through these glades to love devoted, stray,
His Duchess all angelic he would name ;
Eyes darting sparkling rays, and eyes of flame,
Each fuel found in each, then as to-day.

In the far wood vague sounds of laughter rise—
'Twas other lovers steeped in happiness.
Sometimes would silence hush their extasies,
And tenderly he asks, Whence come your sighs ?
She softly answers, Whence your thoughtfulness ?

The charmer and the king, hands interlaced,
Trod the green sward in proud and glad delight—
Their looks, their breath, their thoughts, and hearts embraced ;
O vanished times ! O splendours all effaced !
O suns now sunk away in dismal night !

April 18—.

THE TOMB SAID TO THE ROSE.

THE Tomb said to the Rose,
With the dews thy leaves enclose
What dost thou, Love's own flower ?
The Rose said to the Tomb,
Tell me what is the doom
Of hosts thy depths devour ?

Said the Rose, of every drop
That in my blooms doth stop
Sweet perfume I distil.
Said the Tomb, I make the souls
My dreaded reign controls,
Angels that heaven fill.

From SUNBEAMS & SHADOWS.

1840.

[In the preface to this volume we find the following words:—"Several poems in *Les Rayons et les Ombres* will show the reader that the author is not faithless to the mission he assigned to himself in the prelude to the *Voix Intérieures*:—

> "*Pierre á pierre en songeant aux croyances éteintes*
> *Sous la societé qui tremble á tous les vents*
> *Le penseur reconstruit ces deux colonnes saintes*
> *Le respect des vieillards, et l'amour des enfants.*"

As for the questions about style and form, he will say nothing about them. Those who are good enough to read his writings have long ago known, that if sometimes and on some occasions he admits the vague, the half lights in the thought, yet he very seldom admits them in the expression. Without disparaging the great poetry of the North, which even in France has been represented by some admirable poets, he has himself always had a strong liking for the Southern and precise form. The Bible is his book, Virgil and Dante are his divine masters. The whole of his childhood, being (as he was) a poet, was nothing but one long reverie, accompanied by exact studies. That childhood made his mind what it is, and there is no incompatibility between poetry and exactness. Number enters into art as well as into science. Algebra enters into astronomy, and astronomy is akin to poetry—algebra enters into music, and music is akin to poetry. The human mind has three keys, which open everything—number, letters, notes—to know, to think, to dream—herein you have the whole matter."]

4th May 1840.

TO MADEMOISELLE FANNY DE P——.

YOU, whom fresh girlhood guards from ill,
Laugh! All things blessings on you shower.
Play, sing! A child continue still,
Be still the dawn—be still the flower.

Of the dark future nothing know;
The skies are black, and life a tomb;
Alas! what make we here below—
A little noise in ample gloom.

Hard lot! We see, child, every day
Eyes that most full of charms appear,
That shed around the brightest ray,
Oft shed, too, the most frequent tear.

You, who no trials feel nor woes,
Who have all joys in richest pile,
The ignorance which dreams bestows,
The ignorance which makes you smile.

You have, sweet lily! safe from winds,
Your heart engrossed with harmless toys,
The calm delight which childhood finds,
Pure reflex of a mother's joys.

Your candour makes you all more sweet;
How fairer than all other flame
Your radiant eyes, wherein we meet
Light from a soul devoid of blame.

On you no care, no sorrow lours;
To you, all yours devotion pay;
You dance in summer 'mid the flowers,
In winter by the hearth you play.

The poet's art, gift of the skies,
Near you, dear child, its home doth find ;
Your mother has it in her eyes,
Your father has it in his mind.

Use then this season, bright as small :
Love ! Happiness soon flies away ;
The saddest mortal of us all
Found in his spring some happy day.

In parting, as we breathe a prayer,
Young soul, my blessing I bestow ;
Angel ! yet suffering doomed to share,
Child ! who must to a woman grow.

February 1840.

AS IN A POND.

AS in a pond that sleeps o'erhung by trees,
Two things at once in many a soul one sees :—
The sky, which paints the surface pure and calm,
With all its rays and clouds the heart to charm ;
And then the depth, slime, hideous, dark, and dead,
Where foul black reptiles swarm, and vaguely tread.

April 1839.

IN THE CEMETERY OF ——.

THE crowd still living, laughs on folly set,—
For weal or woe, for better or for worse :
The silent dead, the dead whom they forget,
See me the dreamer, and with me converse.

In me they know the solitary man,
The pilgrim sage who through the forest wends:
The soul that finds (life's sorrows wont to scan)
That all in grief begins—in quiet ends.

They've seen my pensive look, my drooping head,
As 'mong the crosses and the tombs I stood;
Upon the fallen leaves have heard me tread,
Have seen me watch the shades that haunt the wood.

They understand the truths my words have told,
Far more than you who live in noise and strife;
The hymns which doth my lyric soul enfold
To you mere songs, to them with tears are rife.

Though men forget them, Nature still is theirs:
And in Death's garden, where we all shall meet,
Calm dawn an aspect more celestial bears,
The lilies purer seem, the birds more sweet.

'Tis there I live! and there white roses pick;
Repair the tombs, neglected long, and rent;
I come and go through branches dark and thick,
The dead my footsteps hear, and are content.

There, too, I dream. In that field-slumber furled,
Roving, I see with the keen eyes of thought,
My soul transformed into a magic world—
Mysterious glass of all, by Nature wrought.

I see not; yet behold strange insects fly,
Boughs indistinct, shapes, hues, around me play;
There, resting on the stones that broken lie,
I dazzling visions have of flower and ray.

The ideal dream which fills my eyelids, there—
  Floats a bright veil, between the earth and me:
There my ungrateful doubts melt into prayer—
  Standing at first—I end on bended knee.

As to the hollow in the rock doth come,
  To sip a drop of dew, the humble dove;
So my proud soul, in shadow of the tomb,
  Would drink a little faith, and hope, and love.

March 1840.

TO LAURA, DUCHESS D'A——.

SINCE were their souls too mean to comprehend
  That after so great splendours, power, and pride,
Duty and honour called on France to lend
  A grave, wherein thy coffin might abide;

Since they not felt that she who, dauntless still,
  Dared glory, praise, and ruffian knaves confound,
Has right to sleep upon the holy hill,
  Has right to sleep where heroes rest around:

Of our great battles, since the memory
  Burns not within them, like a sacred flame;
Since they are void of heart and sympathy,
  Who could refuse (small boon) the tomb you claim?

'Tis mine to sing an expiatory song—
  Mine, on my knees, our sorrow to rehearse;
To me to guard thy memory doth belong,
  And to embalm in sweet and mournful verse.

This time, 'tis mine to shelter and defend
  Death 'gainst its comrade, pale Forgetfulness ;
With scattered roses, mine thine urn to tend,
  To crown thy name with laurels—and redress.

Since fools heap insults, now thou'rt sunk to rest,
  Upon thy brow, by Cæsar glorious made,
'Tis mine, whose hand thine own in friendship prest,
  To whisper—"I am near ! be not afraid !"

For I my mission have. Armed with my lyre,
  Full of fierce hymns, which would their wrath declare,
I guard the glories of the Empire,
  Resolved that none these to attack shall dare.

Its memories in thy faithful heart were stored,
  When adverse skies spread o'er us Sorrow's night.
On noble wings thy noble spirit soared,
  Oft with an eagle's eye, with angels' flight.

Brave 'neath thy woes, of ours compassionate,
  Woman ! to storms and hostile strife a prey,
Thou never didst their baseness imitate,
  Nor trod to safety's port by coward's way.

Thou glorious muse, and (though inglorious)—I,
  Have each, our lives, this mandate laid upon—
A steadfast knot which each to each doth tie
  The hero's widow, and the soldier's son.

Hence in this Babel, I for ever more
  Each scrap of our scorned flag shall kiss and save.
Unto the Emperor I bade France restore
  His column, and to thee to grant the grave.

February 1840.

A MEETING.

WHEN to the youngest he his alms had cast,
Musing, he stopt to see them. A long fast
Had thinned their cheeks the sun and wind embrowned.
They sat all four together on the ground,
Then having shared, as angels might have done,
A morsel of black bread from gutters won,
They eat, but with a look of woe so deep,
To see them must have made all women weep !
'Tis they are lost, in earth's vast crowded space—
Four children all alone—the world to face ;
No father, mother, not a barn, a shed
For shelter—with bare feet the road they tread,
All save the last, who limped, poor little thing,
In shoes old and too large, and tied with string.
In ditches all night through they often sleep ;
How cold they are at morn, when chill winds sweep,
When the trees, shivering at the lark's first cry,
Make a black profile 'gainst the clear pale sky !—
Their hands, which God made pink, now red remain.
Sundays they seek the hamlet for vile gain :
The little one, from illness pale and lean,
Sings songs unfit, not knowing what they mean,
To make (poor child, alas ! to tears akin)
Some foul hoar villain laugh, who haunts the inn.
So is the pot-house merry made, and thence
To their sharp hunger thrown some paltry pence—
The alms of hell, designed sin's perquisite,
The hideous coin on which the fiend has spit.
And then to eat behind some hedge they go,
Hidden and trembling, more than fawn or doe—
For oft they're beaten, always chased away.
'Tis thus, poor innocents, condemned each day

Beneath my walls and yours they famished stray,
As chance directs, the eldest leads the way.

Then he, the dreamer, turned his gaze on high,
And nought but calm warm ether meets his eye ;
The bounteous sun, air full of golden wings,
From the blue vault the sweet soft peace that springs ;
The joys, the shouts, that Nature's triumph swell,
Down from the sky-birds on the children fell.

June 1839.

WHEN NOISY RABBLE.

WHEN, noisy rabble, you together meet
To track, till you discover, his retreat,
All rousing one another, furious ! mad !
"Do you not scent him?" Sober folk and sad
Your cries made dream some dragon in his lair,
With flaming eyes, and scales instead of hair,
Wonder to find the object of your rage
This thoughtful, gentle, kind, mysterious sage.

April 1839.

ALL WINGED CREATURES I HAVE LOVED.

ALL the winged creatures I have ever loved !
And when, a child, I 'neath the thicket roved,
I from their nests the little birds conveyed—
At first, of reeds I cages for them made,
Where, mid green mosses, I to tame them tried.
Later, I used to leave the windows wide :

They flew not off, or if the woods their choice,
Still they returned whene'er they heard my voice.
A dove and I long lived in friendliness!
Now I the art of taming souls possess.

April 1840.

GOD, WHOSE GIFTS IN GRACIOUS FLOOD.

GOD, whose gifts in gracious flood
Unto all who seek are sent,
Only asks you to be good,
And is content.

So the world, where all things are
Sparkling, yet does nought ignite,
Only asks you to be fair,
And finds delight.

And my heart, in the sweet shade
Of two beauteous eyes steeped o'er,
Only asks if you be glad,
And nothing more.

January 1840.

A NIGHT IN JUNE.

IN summer—daylight fled—where flowers abound,
The fields their luscious fragrance pour afar;
With half-closed eyes, ears scarce awake to sound,
Slumbering, our minds not all unconscious are.
The stars more pure, shine through the shadowy skies,
Uncertain twilight tints th' eternal vault,
Dawn, soft and pale, waiting its hour to rise,
Seems all night long on heaven's low ridge to halt.

From CHASTISEMENTS.

1853.

[Translator's Note.—The specimens of the poet's invective and tremendous powers of vituperation in this collection have been inserted because without them the representation of his feelings, dispositions, and opinions, as he himself wished them to be known, and as they are revealed in his works, would have been altogether incomp'ete.]

SINCE SUNK THE JUST WITHIN THE ABYSS.

SINCE sunk the just within the abyss,
The crown to crime delivered is;
Since right and law they all efface,
Since now the boldest silent stand,
Since the dishonour of the land,
In placards, on the walls they place:

Republic! by our fathers wrought,
Pantheon vast with glories fraught,
Thou golden dome in freedom's blue,
Great temple of immortal shades,
Since villainy now escalades
Thy walls the Empire there to glue;

Since all with weakness are beset,
Since they can cringe, since they forget
The true, the pure, the great, the brave,
The indignant voice of history,
Honour, fame, right, nobility,
And those now resting in the grave :

Grief, Exile !—yes, I cherish them:
Mourning be thou my diadem ;
Proud poverty my humour fits.
I love my door, which tempests smite,
And that grave statue, sorrow, hight,
Which haunts my steps, and by me sits.

I cling to my unhappiness—
The gloom wherein I repossess
You, whom my heart and spirit prize—
Honour, faith, virtue unavowed,
Thou ! liberty ! the exile proud ;
Thou ! great proscribed, self-sacrifice.

I love this island, lone and wild,
Jersey, where England, freedom's child,
'Neath its old flag doth right maintain ;
The gloomy billows, spreading far,
The ships, that wandering chariots are,
The ocean, that mysterious plain.

Thy gulls, O thou deep sea ! I like,
Who, with their sad-hued pinions, strike
Thy waves, and briny pearl-drops throw ;
Who plunge beneath thy giant surge,
And from the yawning jaws emerge,
As a soul issues from its woe.

I like that solemn rock and drear
Whence the eternal plaint I hear,
Like vain regrets, for aye re-born :
That each successive night awakes,
As on the rock the billow breaks,
As mothers for their children mourn.

JERSEY, *December* 1852.

THE GRASS-GROWN PATH.

O PATH, where now the grass grows high,
And leafy wood, and hill, and plain !
Why all this grief ?—this silence, why ?
He who once came comes not again !

Why from the window watcheth none ?
The garden flowerless and bare ?
O house ! where is your master gone ?
"I know not, but he is elsewhere."

Dog ! keep good watch ! "What should I keep ?
Deserted, empty is the house.
The child does for his father weep,
The woman for her absent spouse."

Where is he gone ? "To join the dead !"
Ye rock-dashed waves that sadly groan,
Whence come you ? "From the galleys dread."
What bring you here ? "A skeleton."

July 1853.

NO.

LET Sparta daggers use, and Rome the sword,
But let not us in haste revenge to fetch,
A Brutus to knave Bonaparte afford,
But for a bitterer future keep the wretch.

I warrant you, you shall be satisfied—
You, by whom exile's grievous weight is borne;
Captives and martyrs, now by him defied—
You shall be sated, you who grieve and mourn.

Still in the scabbard leave the impatient blade;
The guilty ne'er is pardoned by his crime.
Trust the commands of God, though long delayed
(The patient judge), to his Avenger—Time.

Let him then live in depths of infamy;
His blood would e'en disgrace the headsman's stroke.
Let Time, the terrible unknown, draw nigh,
Who chastisement holds hidden 'neath his cloak.

Let him be crowned as deepest in disgrace,
The master of low brows and hearts defiled;
Let senators vote empires to his race,
If he can find a mate and have a child.

By means of mass and murder let him reign;
Of this Arch-Rogue an Emperor let them make;
And let the grovelling Church, his courtesan,
Glide to his den, and there his bed partake.

Let Siboux honour, Troplong hold him dear;
Let them his foot, deep-dipt in blood, embrace;
Let Cæsar live—Louvel and Lacenaire
Would count the killing such a knave disgrace.

Kill not this man, ye who on vengeance think—
  Mysterious dreamers, solitary, strong—
Who, while his minions feast, and with him drink,
  Walks with clenched fist the murdered dead among.

Our triumph is secure, with help from high ;
  Than fury's bolt, example reckons more.
No !—kill him not ; the scathing pillory
  Graced sometimes should be by an Emperor.

JERSEY, *October* 1852.

SACER ESTO.

NO, Freedom ! People, no ! He must not die—
  'Twould be too simple, too unscorned an end,
After all law destroyed.—The hour brought nigh,
  When holy shame must back to heaven ascend.

After his bloody wager, foully won,
  Conqueror by ambush laid, by fire and sword ;
After his perjury, plots, murders done,
  His false oath taken—crime by God abhorred.

After he has dragged France, stabbed to the heart,
  To his polluted car tied by the feet,
Should the vile wretch by a sword-stroke depart,
  And death like Pompey or like Cæsar meet ?

No ! He th' Assassin is, who basely killed,
  Who sabred, and shot down without remorse ;
Who has made houses empty, graves has filled,
  And walks 'neath the fixed gaze of many a corpse !

By this Man's deed—Ephemeral Emperor—
Daughters and sons are fatherless and sad ;
The widow weeps, kneels, sobs, her anguish o'er ;
The Mother seems a ghost in mourning clad.

The reels which weave his robes of royalty,
Deep dyed, are wound about with blood-stained thread ;
Montmartre's Boulevard doth the vat supply,
And steeps his mantle in imperial red !

He exiles you to Afric, to Cayenne—
Heroes and Martyrs ! whom he convicts calls.
His dripping Guilliotine its knife doth stain,
And drop by drop the blood upon him falls.

When livid treason, of his crimes the guide,
Raps at his door, he welcomes his ally.—
He is the Fratricide, the Parricide :
People, on this account he must not die.

Keep the man living.—Noble punishment !
Would that some day, him we may wandering find,
Naked, crouched, shivering, like reed tempest bent,
Beneath the execration of mankind.

Clasped by the past—crammed with those crimes of his,
As with a crown all bristling o'er with nails,
Seeking dark spots—the forest, the abyss ;
Pale, scared, and whom the wolf as kindred hails.

In some vile hulks, fetters his only sound,
Telling to the deaf rocks his vain despair ;
Alone, alone, Silence and Hate around—
Men nowhere near, and Spectres everywhere !

Aged, rejected by Death's scornful hand,
  Doomed, abject, trembling, through long years to plod—
People, avoid that man, marked by a brand;
  Let Cain pass by, for he belongs to God.

JERSEY 1852.

THE IMPERIAL MANTLE.

YOU whose labour is sweet and gay,
  You who gather no other prey,
  But scents and breezes of the sky;—
You who lie hid in bleak December,
Who rob the flowers of their amber,
  Honey for mortals to supply.

Ye yellow sippers of the dew,
Who, when the spring-tide comes anew,
  Dainties on hill and meadows taste;—
Ye sisters of all flowerets bright,
O bees! ye daughters of the light,
  From that unworthy mantle haste.

Ye Amazons! that man attack!
Ye busy workers, never slack,
  Ye who for right and duty care;—
Ye wings of gold and darts of flame,
Whirl fiercely round that son of shame;
  Say to him—"Know you who we are?

"O man accursed! we are the Bees—
Of cottages 'mid shady trees
  The sunny benchour hive equips;

We fly (when the blue sky uncloses),
Upon the mouth of opening roses,
And settle upon Plato's lips.

"What springs from mire returneth there.—
Go! find Tiberius in his lair,
The ninth Charles on his balcony!
Go!—on your purple you should place,
Not bees of sweet Hymettus race,
But Montfaucon's ill-omened fly."

Then all together sting, invade,
Shaming the people who 're afraid,
And this polluted traitor blind;
Swarm—rush upon him fierce and stout,
By bees let him be driven out,
Since men, alas! we cowards find.

JERSEY, *June* 1863.

THE WORST TREASON.

THE deepest infamy man can attain,
Is or to strangle Rome, or France enchain;
Whate'er the place, the land, the city be,
'Tis to rob man of soul and liberty—
'Tis with drawn sword the senate to invade,
And murder law, in its own court betrayed.
To enslave the land is guilt of such black dye,
It is ne'er quitted by God's vengeful eye;
The crime once done, the day of grace expires,
Heaven's punishment, which, howe'er slow, ne'er tires,
Begins to march, and comes serene and calm,
With her steel knotted whip beneath her arm.

JERSEY, *November* 1852.

THE PARTY OF CRIME.

THIS Government with Tiger claws and heart !
Imperial Mask—Fictitious Bonaparte !
Doubtless Beauharnais—Verhuell possibly—
Who, that Rome catholic might crucify
Rome's free Republic, gave it bound by stealth ;
That man, th' Assassin of the commonwealth ;
That upstart, whom to push blind Fortune chose ;
That glutton, who ne'er to ambition rose ;
That "Highness," base, skilled to seize lucky times ;
That wolf, on whom I loose a pack of rhymes.
What then ? This Buccaneer, this reprobate,
Has changed a day of pride to shame and hate,
On glory loaded crime, soiled victory,
And, wretch ! robbed Austerlitz from history !
A dagger from that trophy proud has ta'en,
And townsmen, workmen, countrymen has slain ;
Has of the dead piled up a dreadful heap,
While his arm-chair did safe the coward keep.
Sabre in hand, upon his oath he rushed,
And justice, right, and government he crushed :
Law, honour—all, yes even Hope he killed, [filled
And with pure blood (your blood, O France !) has
All of our rivers, from the Seine to Var—
Thus won the Louvre, while he deserved Clamàr.
And now he reigns, leaning his heel, that drips
With blood, my country ! on thy wounded lips.
This has he done—I nought exaggerate—
And when this Gallows-bird we reprol[illegible]e,
And all the frauds which in his treason :eem
(So monstrous one might think the whole a dream),
And cry, by horror roused, with scorn replete,
March, people ! fly to arms ! invade the street,

Down with that sword, unworthy of the name,
Let day re-shine, and right her reign reclaim.

'Tis we, forsooth, proscribed by these vile curs,
Who are assassins, bandits, murderers ;—
'Tis we who blood and civil war desire—
'Tis we who set the town, the land on fire !

What then? To reign through death, to trample right,
To be a knave, hard, cynical, adroit ;
To say, " I'm Cæsar," while you're but a clown,
To stifle thought—life, breath, to trample down ;
To force great eighty-nine to retrogade,
The laws, the press, the tribune to invade ;
To muzzle the Great Nation as a beast,
To reign by force, yourself from fear released ;
For felon's sake, abuses to restore,
And France to hand to greedy Troplongs o'er,
On pretext that she was in times long since
Devoured by King, and Gentleman, and Prince ;
To give these dogs what those old lions left,
Millions and palaces, gleesome and deft,
To seize ;—plain despotism to profess,
And riot in debauches and excess ;
Heroes to torture and the hulks to give,
The great, the good, to exile, and to live
'Mid Greeks, as for Byzantian despot meet ;
To be the arms that kill, the hands that cheat.

" People ! This then is virtue, righteousness !
While justice murder-stricken, to confess
In exile, through the fumes of incense base,
Armies to tell and Tyrants to their face—
Your name is force, injustice, robbery.
Soldiers you have, and vast artillery ;

The earth a kingdom 'neath your feet we see—
You the Colossus, and the atom we.
Still we choose war, for liberty to fight,
You for oppression, we for truth and right;
To show the pontons and dark catacombs,
And cry, while standing o'er the late filled tombs:
Frenchmen, beware the day of late remorse,
For children's tears, and many a martyred corse;
Break that sepulchral man, wake France to light,
Tear from your flesh that Nero parasite;
Rise from the blood-stained earth, beauteous and bold,
The sword one hand, and one the law shall hold!"

For us such words to speak, perform this task,
This Pirate chase, this Hypocrite unmask
(Since honour, duty, to this strife compel),
Is crime!—Hear this, Thou who on high dost dwell.
O God! this they maintain before Thy face,
Dread witness of all crimes in every place:
'Tis this they spread before th' Eternal eyes!

What fumes of blood from all their hands arise!
What babes, old men, wives, maidens, yet have not
Had time within their dismal graves to rot!
What? Paris still is bleeding, still each eye
Can see in heaven inscribed his perjury!
And these foul wretches dare reproaches heap!
O just eruption of resentment deep!

And many a sot—triumphant, bloated, red—
Answers—"Your noise disturbs me in my bed;
All goes on well, tradesmen get rich a-pace;
Our women are one mass of flowers and lace.
Of what do you complain?"—Another calls
(Some empty dandy who the pavement crawls),

"From 'change each day some twenty pounds I bring:
Money flows free, as water from the spring;
Workmen have now three times their former wage.
Splendid! To make and spend is all the rage.
It seems some demagogues are sent away—
Right, too——
I praise the feast, the ball, the play
Given by the Prince, whom I did erst resist
Wrongly. What matters certain dolts dismissed?
As for the dead—they're dead; let the fools be.
Hail! men of sense—and easy times for me,
Where you may choose a dozen schemes among,
And boldly speculate, and can't go wrong.
The red-republic may in caverns bark [stark.
Freedom, Right, Progress. Bosh!—they're madness
I pocketed a premium even now,
And I dont care—(I must the charge allow,
Not minding the philippics which you bawl)—
If prices rise, should honour chance to fall."

O hideous speech!—'tis held—you hear the cry!
Learn then the dregs, contented Infamy:
That once for all we to your face declare,
That we, the wanderers, scattered everywhere,
Roaming without or passport, hearth, or name—
We, the proscribed, you cannot daunt or shame;
We, to the land's disgrace who ne'er consent
(And though the while on justice sternly bent),
No scaffolds, no reprisals wish to have;
We whom this Mandrin thinks he can enslave,
We to see liberty revive, and shame
Die, and all brows respect and worth reclaim,
To free Rome, Lombards, Germans, Hungary,
To bid shine forth the Sun of Freedom's sky,
The mother Commonwealth, and Europe's guide.

That forge and palace may in peace abide ;
To bring that flower, Fraternity, to light,
And to give labour uncontested right ;
To rescue martyrs from the galley's oar,
Husbands to wives, and sons to sires restore ;—
In short, this mighty nation, and the age,
From Bonaparte and shame to disengage :
To reach this end which soul, which heart enjoins,
In silence and in gloom we gird our loins.

And know we're ready, plans and means bethought—
The sacrifice is all, the danger nought—
Ready, when God gives sign, to yield our breath,
For, seeing what now lives, we covet death ;
For 'neath this brass-browed scoundrel, who would be !
We lost to country—you to liberty.
Learn you, who think free air might harm your health,
You, who from out this dunghill dig your wealth,
We will not let the land in slumber lie,
But we will summon, till our latest sigh,
To help of France, now fettered, strangled, sold,
Sacred revolt.—Like our great sires of old,
We summon God's own lightning to our aid.

This is our purpose, and we thus are made ;
Preferring, if Fate wills, to see our blood
Crushed 'neath His wheels, than wallow in your mud

JERSEY, 1852.

From CONTEMPLATIONS.

Vol. I.–1856.

[The two volumes of the *Contemplations* may almost be taken as an autobiography of twenty-five years of the poet's life, and this is what he says in the preface to the first volume:—"Five-and-twenty years are contained in these two volumes. 'Grande mortalis ævi spatium.' The author has, so to speak, allowed this book to construct itself in him. Life, filtering drop by drop through its events and sufferings, has deposited it in his heart. Those who will lean over it will find their own image reflected in that deep and dismal water, which has slowly there gathered itself together in the depths of a soul, and the contents of this book concern the reader as intimately as the author.—*Homo Sum.* To pass through tumult, rumour, dreamings, contests, pleasure, labour, grief, silence—to find repose in sacrifice, and there to turn the thoughts to God—to begin in publicity and to end in solitude. Is not this, allowing for individual proportions, the history of us all? No one will be surprised to see these two volumes shade by shade become more and more gloomy—happiness, that fast fading flower of youth, drops its leaves page by page in the first volume, which is of Hope, and disappears in the second volume, which is of Mourning—and what mourning? The true, the only one, Death, the loss of those we love. We have just said that these two volumes are the autobiography of a soul—The Then—and the Now, divided by a gulf—The Tomb."]

TO MY DAUGHTER.

YOU see, my child, that I submit to fate:
Then do like me—live from the world apart,
Not happy, not triumphant: but await
With uncomplaining heart.

Be good and gentle; raise a blameless brow;
As day displays its light within the sky,
Let, through your azure eyes, loved daughter, show
Your soul's integrity.

Earth does to none or joy or triumph give;
All things are incomplete, all quickly fade.
Dear Child, Time is a shadow, and our life
Of the same substance made.

To all men is their lot a weary thrall,
And for their happiness—ah! Fate unkind!—
All things have failed; alas! in saying all,
How little do we find.

That little is, what each one fain would hold,
What each desires and seeks with fruitless toil—
A word, a sounding name, a little gold,
A look, a loving smile.

Such is the loveless state of mighty kings;
Vast deserts faint for lack of freshening dew;
And man is as a well, which, failing springs,
Always leave void anew.

Behold those thinkers whom we deem divine,
Those heroes 'neath whose glance the nations bend,
Those mighty names that ever glorious shine,
Far as earth's bounds extend—

When they a little while, with torch-like glare,
All eyes have dazzled, and their light displayed,
They pass away into the tomb, and there
Seek grateful rest and shade.

Kind Heaven, that sees our sorrows, pains, and fears,
Feels for our lives, to vanity a prey ;
And every dawn bedews with pitying tears
The birth of each sad day.

God gives us light at every step we go,
And tells us of His nature and our own ;
One certain law from all things here below,
And from mankind, is shown.

All must obey that edict from above,
Which in the compass of each soul doth fall ;
Nothing to hate, dear Child, and all to love—
At least, to pity all.

PARIS, *October* 1842.

CHILDHOOD.

THE Child was singing, and the Mother lay
Stretched on the bed which pain and anguish throng,
Death's cloud fast closing on her parting day :
I heard her labouring breath, I heard the song.

The Child its gambols by the lattice plied ;
Its sport, its laughter, sounded glad and bright ;
And the poor Mother by her darling's side,
Who sang all day, coughed through the painful night.

The Mother sleeps the cloister's stones below ;
The Child sings, heedless of its orphan state :
Grief is a fruit that God forbids to grow
On boughs too feeble to support its weight.

PARIS, *January* 1835.

IF MY VERSES HAD THE WINGS.

SONGS as sweet as summer brings,
To your flowery lawn should fly
If my verses had the wings—
Wings of birds that haunt the sky.

Like the spark that upward springs,
They would seek your smiling hearth,
If my verses had the wings—
Wings such as a spirit hath.

Near you, close as ivy clings,
They would dwell by night and day
If my verses had the wings—
Wings like love to speed the way.

PARIS, *March* 18—.

A SONG.

IF you have nought to say the while,
Why haunt my path, seductive maid ?
Why look upon me with a smile
Enough to turn a monarch's head ?
If you have nought to say the while,
Why hither come, seductive maid ?

If you have nothing to impart,
  Why press my hand with soft delay?
Of the kind thoughts that filled your heart
  As hitherward you sped your way,
If you have nothing to impart,
  Why press my hand with soft delay?

My absence, if you really will,
  Why then forever haunt my path?
Sweet maid, whose sight my heart to thrill
  With joy and pain, such power hath;
My absence, if you really will,
  Why then forever haunt my path?

May 18—.

'TIS ALL THE FASHION, WELL I KNOW.

'TIS all the fashion, well I know,
  To run about the world and scream,
That they the greater wisdom show,
  Who of vast non-existence dream.

Who praise black desolating fame,
  Heroes and iron flashing bright,
Battles and war, the glorious name
  Men make themselves, of death and night

Who praise the victories of stee
  Good fortune, and the victor's car,
Of which the one and t' other wheel
  Pompey and laurelled Cæsar are.

Cannæ, Pharsalia's bloody day,
And all that Neros pleasant found
Of human dust to waft away,
Upon the trumpet's idle sound.

I know 'tis now the common way
Those pigmy giants to adore ;
Who think, because they're froth and spray,
That Ocean's mighty floods they pour.

To put your faith in dust alone,
And clatter which a week destroys
In lofty Pyramids of stone,
And in an avalanche of noise.

But I prefer, O happy springs !
But I prefer, O rivers fair!
Unto the God of warrior kings,
The God who makes the birds His care.

My angel child ! beneath the shade
Where we are bright because we love ;
More than the God who tempests made,
And in whose name battalions move :

More than the God of armies dire,
Of cannons with their deadly store,
Of wounds and slaughter, smoke and fire—
The God of goodness I adore.

God who doth souls to love incline,
Who to the lover's heart supplies
The poem's first inspired line—
The last descended from the skies.

Who clothes the wing with feathers o'er,
Who cares what nests and eggs betides,
Whether the thrush has mossy store,
And for the plovers corn provides ;

Who for each songful Orpheus forms
A world of vast and subtle power,
Which with delightful fairies swarms,
When April sprouts with blade and flower ;

So that, ere long, abroad it flies,
Scattered throughout the genial spring ;
While does a wondrous halo rise
From all the nests that sweetly sing.

Although our glory dost thou see,
Shines from the exploits we have done,
And that our famous history
Holds many a famous Pantheon ;

Although we have these swords of ours,
Cheops and Babel, mighty fane,
Vast palaces, and dreams, and towers,
And tombs that to the heavens attain ;

Little of worth with men would stay,
Who but a day's brief span abide,
If God our Roses took away ;
If God the sweets of love denied.

CHELLES, *September* 18—.

'TIS COLD.

THE hard white road shows winter's hold,
The wicked make thy days a prey ;
Thy small soft hands are nipt with cold,
And hatred's breath thy joy would stay.

The snow fills the dark furrows o'er,
And faint and failing is the light.
Against the north wind close the door,
And close the window to the night.

And then your heart leave open wide—
A sacred window is the heart ;
Though now the sun thick vapours hide,
God will, perhaps, some rays impart,

Doubt happiness—vain mortal feast—
Doubt man, with cruel envy rife,
Doubt thou the altar and the priest,
But, O ! believe in love, my life !

Believe in love which nought can tire,
Which bright through every veil appears,
In love ! the fuel of the fire,
In love ! the ray that lights the spheres.

Love ! and ne'er yield thee to despair ;
Within thy soul, which bears my trace,
Where whispered low my verses are,
Leave everything to keep its place.

The faith which never fails or halts,
The peace which lofty virtues bring,
Indulgence for a neighbour's faults,
The sponge which wipes out everything.

From these pure noble thoughts of thine
Let nothing fall, nor shrink from sight;
Make of your love a torch to shine—
What burns may also give us light.

To those fiends of unfriendliness,
Match thy calm sweetness, early, late:
Of pity pour them back no less
Than they do vomit thee of hate.

Hate is the winter of the heart!
Thy pity, yet thy courage keep;
Smile on! for thou the victor art:
Rainbow! forth from the tempest leap.

Preserve thy love, which cannot die:
Winter dims not the stars that roll;
God withdraws nothing from the sky:
Withdraw thou nothing from thy soul.

December 18—.

THERE I BREATHE, WHERE THROBS THY HEART.

I BUT breathe, where throbs thy heart.
What the use (I prithee say)
To remain, if thou depart?
Live, if thou wilt go away?

Why live as the shadow lone
Of my angel—ta'en to flight?
Why 'neath skies that darkly frown
Be no more than dismal night?

A flower upon the wall I grow,
April my sole wealth I call ;
'Tis enough that thou shouldst go,
Then nought will remain at all.

With bright rays you circle me,
Sight of thee is all my care ;
'Tis enough that thou shouldst flee,
I must follow anywhere.

If thou go, my head will bow,
My soul the sky (its nest of old)
Seek ; for in thy white hand thou
That wild bird dost prisoner hold.

What do with this life of mine,
If thy step I hearken not ?
Is't my life, or is it thine
Which departs ? I nothing wot.

When my courage fails or sinks,
From thy heart now strength I take ;
I am like the dove who drinks
From the sky-reflecting lake.

Love the soul can clearly tell,
Of all things or sad or bright,
And that little flame as well
Lightens up the Infinite.

Total Nature without thee
Is a gaol with bolted door ;
There I go—as chance may be,
Wan and pale, and loved no more.

Go ! Then all things fade and fall,
Gloom doth on my forehead stand ;
A feast is but a funeral,
Exile e'en my native land.

I entreat, nay, will be heard—
Fly not from my miseries ;
Of my soul thou art the bird,
Who dost sing among my trees.

What can any joy bestow ?
What henceforward can I fear ?
With my life what can I do,
If thou art no longer near ?

In the sun's light thou dost bear,
In the flowery thickets bring,
On one angel's wing my prayer,
And my songs on 'tother wing.

To the fields what shall I say ?
Witness of my hopeless woe ;—
With the Star's bright golden ray,
With the flowers, what can I do ?

What say to the woods morose,
That did in thy sweetness bask ?
What can answer to the Rose,
Which will for her sister ask ?

I shall die ! Go if thou dare !
Of what use, O circling days,
To look on things however fair,
When not gladdened by her gaze ?

What do with my harp the while?
What with Right or Destiny?
Ah, without thy sunny smile,
How void will my mornings be!

What without thy fellowship
Do with day?—do with the skies?
With my kiss without thy lip?
With my tears without thine eyes?

August 18—.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF THE DIVINA COMMEDIA.

ONE evening on the road I saw a stranger come,
Clad in an ample cloak, like Consul of old Rome.
Dark did he seem to me against the moon-lit skies.
The wayfarer stood still, and fixed on me his eyes;
So dazzling, so profound, that with fierce light they shone.
He said, "I was at first, in ages long a-gone,
A lofty mountain, which o'er the horizon spread;
Then, a yet sightless soul; I from that prison sped,
And reached one higher step in being's rising stairs.
I was an Oak, and had my Altars, Priests, and prayers;
And scattered in the air mysterious sounds and strange.
Next I a Lion was, in deserts vast to range,
Whose hoarse resounding voice the sable night appalled.
At length I am a man, and I am Dante called.

July 1843.

WRITTEN AT THE FOOT OF A CRUCIFIX.

WEEPERS ! come to this God, for he doth weep ;
Ye Sufferers ! come to Him, for he doth cure ;
Ye fearful come, for He doth pity keep ;
Come ye who pass, for He doth still endure.

ANOTHER VERSION.

Come to this God, ye weepers, for He weeps ;
Come to Him, ye who suffer, for He cures ;
Come to Him, ye who fear : He pity keeps ;
Come to Him, ye who pass, for He endures.

ANOTHER VERSION.

Come, ye who weep, to Jesus, for He weeps ;
Come to Him, ye afflicted, for He cures ;
Come to Him, tremblers, for He mercy keeps ;
Come ye who pass away, for he endures.

March 1842.

QUIA PULVIS ES.

THESE depart and those remain :
'Neath northern blasts, whose thousand voices plain,
Dust and the race of man pass by alike.
Alas ! the same wind in this world's sad shade
Upon each human head
And forest leaves doth strike.

Those who stay, to those who go,
Cry out—" Ah. wretched men, by death laid low !

"What! speech and sound no more you hear to call.
What? you will see no more the trees, the sky,
But must 'neath marble lie,
And in the dark night fall."

Those who go, to those who stay,
Cry—"That you naught possess, your tears betray
Glory and joy for you are idle boasts;
God gives the Dead real good, a lasting throne;
'Tis we who live alone—
You living, are but ghosts."

February 1841.

TO THE MOTHER OF THE DEAD CHILD.

YOU did too oft your little Angel tell,
That other Angels were on high.
In Heaven, where nothing changes, all is well,
And none too soon can thither fly.

That heaven is a dome, where wondrous pillars are,
A tent of thousand richest hues;
A garden filled with lilies, each a star,
Each star a flower to the view.

That 'tis a gladder place than one can say,
Where, to make life all bright and rare,
We have the cherubim to laugh and play,
And the good God to love us there.

That for a heart torch-like to burn, is sweet—
Sweet, too, to live in heavenly bliss
Near the blest Virgin and at Jesus' feet,
In such a noble house as this!

And you forgot to teach your little son
  Frail tender plant ! whose loss you rue
That while in this sad life you were his own,
  He too was everything to you.

That young, the mother's love her child doth fold—
  His to protect her later on ;
And that she will require, when she is old,
  A man, at the same time a son.

Not oft enough to that young soul you said,
  God wills us to remain below ;
Woman a guide to man, Man woman's aid,
  Both in life's battle and its woe.

So on a time—sad loss that must abide—
  The sweet child could no longer stay ;
The cage's door—alas ! you left it wide,
  And so your nestling flew away.

April 1843.

EPITAPH.

HE lived, he played, a little laughing sprite :
  Why, Nature, didst thou snatch him from the light ?
Hast thou not myriad birds within thy bowers ?
  Stars, and great woods, blue skies, and ocean wild ?
  Why, then, from his lone mother snatch the child,
And hide him underneath the bed of flowers ?

This one child more cannot enlarge thy reign,
Star-spangled Nature ; thou no joy dost gain.

The Mother's heart so many cares oppress—
That heart whose joys do equal pangs create—
Abyss, as thou, O Nature ! deep and great,
Is empty made and void, by this child less.

May 1843.

EVENING JOYS.

ON mountains, when the sun his light sinks low,
And level shafts speed from his golden bow,
The does and fawns fill all the hills and heath ;
There, 'mid the rocks like marble veined, one sees
A happy cot. Above are blooming trees,
And blooming children are beneath.

'Tis now the time on fearful things to think :
Topers, one sees round tables dance and drink,
Striking their stools in boisterous delight—
And with their loves some noisy chorus shout—
The letters of the songs their lips tell out
Soon will their names upon their tombstones write.

To die ! Let's ask ourselves each passing day,
How shall we pass along that latest way ?
Hard 'tis to nobly draw our parting breath !
Dismal the hour, and apt the soul to fail.
Ah, to step forth ! Oh, what a fearful vale
Is the dark ambuscade of death !

Livid, death-clutched, his bones cold shivers through ;
Round him, all live, laugh, love, pass to and fro ;
Flowers shine, and birds sing in their summer sky.
The dying man, while life's flame sinks and flies,
Shrinks 'neath the sky the soul's dark precipice—
Abyss of darkness and tranquillity.

When I recall the strange, pale brow of those
Whom I have watched at that dread hour's close—
Friends, brothers, parents, who have all passed by—
At moments, when to dream the spirit dares,
I often ask, "At what is it that stares
The dying man's scared eye?"

What sees he? Ah, dismay! dark shadowy routes,
A chaos made of spectres and of doubts;
Earth a mere dream, worms the reality,
Dim day, that frights the soul, now called away;
And mingles with expiring life's last ray,
Thy earliest glare, dreadful Eternity!

One feels a horrid stab dealt in the shade;
Our deeds all flee as in some masquerade;
All that once smiled remorse or pain appears.
Dread hour, e'en for the loftiest soul to meet,
When truth unveils, when life throws at your feet
Its mask, and "I am Death!" declares.

If thus you fright hearts void of self-reproach,
Thou Grave! all horror-struck, the bad approach:
Thy depth he deems of crimson flame the abode.
When o'er thy void for him the stone is raised,
He leans, and sees, as in a dream amazed,
The vague, dim face, and the fixed eye of God.

BIARRITZ, *July* 1843.

VOL. II.

15TH FEBRUARY 1843.

LOVE him who loves thee, and with him be blest.
Farewell! His treasure be, as thou wert mine.
Go, my blest child! to the new house, now thine,
And make them happy, and leave us distrest.

We fain would keep—they long for thee the while!
Daughter, Wife, Angel, Child, with duties cope,
Twofold—leave us regret, and bring them hope.
Go forth with tears, and enter with a smile.

IN THE CHURCH, 15*th February* 1843.

OUR LIFE TOGETHER.

WHEN we our life together led
On the hill-side, now long ago,
Where waved the trees, and waters sped,
Where the house hugged the wood below—

She was ten years—thrice ten was I.
I was the universe to her.
How sweet the grass, how clear the sky,
Beneath the thick green woods of fir.

My lot she glad and happy made,
My labours light, and blue my sky;
When she "My father!" to me said,
My full heart would "My God!" reply.

'Mid thousand dreams, by fancy wrought,
I heard her prattle, fond and bright;
My forehead shadowed o'er with thought,
Her merry glance o'erflowed with light.

And when her little hand I took,
Like a princess she proudly trod,
And always would for flowers look,
And for the poor upon the road.

As others steal she gave her store,
Then would from observation flit.
O! the fine little frock she wore!
Ah, me! do you remember it?

Each evening she beside my light
Prattled in low melodious strain,
While out of doors the moths of night
Struck up against the window-pane.

She was like angels of the skies—
How charmingly she greeted you!
Heaven's grace had placed within her eyes
The look that could not be untrue.

I was so young when she was born
To shine upon my destiny;
She was the child of my glad morn,
The star of dawn that lit my sky.

And when the moon shone calm and clear
In Heaven, in those past days so good,
How did we wander far and near,
Or in the plain or in the wood?

Then towards the isolated light,
Which, star-like, in our cottage burned,
By the vale hastening through the night,
The corner of the wall we turned.

When home regained, with hearts inflamed,
We told heaven's glories o'er and o'er :
I that young spirit shaped and framed,
As bees concoct their honey store.

And then how glad she was—how gay,
Sweet angel, with unspotted mind !
But all these things are past away—
Gone like a shadow, or the wind !

VILLEQUIER, *4th September* 1844.

PALE WAS SHE, AND YET ROSY RED.

PALE was she, and yet rosy red,
Slight, with a wealth of waving hair ;
"I will" was what she never said,
But often said—"I do not dare."

My Bible every eve she took,
To teach her sister how to spell ;
And, like a peaceful lamp, her look
On that young heart in splendour fell.

On that blest Book, by me admired,
Their eyes the holy pages sought—
Book where the one, to read, acquired,
And where the other gathered thought.

O'er her, who, singly, had not read,
  Her charming brow she used to lean ;
Some aged parent (you had said,
  So staid and gentle was her mien).

"You must be good," she then would say—
  Yet never named the Evil One ;
From page to page their fingers stray,
  On Moses, and on Solomon ;

On Cyrus, who was Persia's king,
  On Moloch and Leviathan ;
On hell, where Jesus hope may bring :
  Eden, where Satan's fraud began.

I listened—O enormous joy !
  Sister by sister to behold ;
My eyes, in silent ecstasy,
  Drank sweetness more than can be told.

And in our room, retired and low,
  We felt (all three, as hid we stood),
Through the wide open casement blow
  The breathings of the night and wood.

And while from out the page august
  Their hearts, with holy fervour fraught,
Sought out the fair, the true, the just—
  Wrapt in ecstatic dreams, methought

That songs of praise surrounded me,
  Such as in Heaven above find voice,
And 'neath those angel hands to see
  The Book of God itself rejoice.

1*st Oct.*

MEMORIES.

O MEMORIES ! O morn ! O spring !
Soft ray with warmth, yet grief beset,
When she was but a little thing,
Her sister a mere child as yet.

Chance you upon the hill to know,
Which joins Montlignon to Saint Leu,
A terrace leaning on the brow,
'Twixt sombre woods and skies of blue ?

'Twas there we lived. Dive once again,
My heart, into that happy day.
I heard her 'neath my window pane,
At early morning gently play.

The dewy grass she hurried o'er,
Noiseless, for fear my sleep to break ;
To ope my window I forbore,
Lest to her wings my bird should take.

Her brothers laughed.—Ah, morning sky !
All things with songs of gladness rang ;
The house with nature's melody,
And with the birds my children sang.

I coughed, and she grew wondrous brave ;
She climbed with gentle steps, and slow,
And told, in words demure and grave,
" I've left the children down below.'

No matter well or ill attired,
If joyful was my heart or sad ;
My fairy—she was still admired,
Still was the star that made me glad.

In games the live-long day we pass—
  Sweet intercourse, delightful play—
At eve, as she the eldest was,
  "Come, father!" she was wont to say;

"We're going now to bring your chair;
  You must some wondrous story tell."
I saw how bright their glances were,
  Rays fit in Paradise to dwell.

Then would I make some tale profound,
  Of fights and slaughter prodigal;
And all my characters I found
  Among the shadows on the wall.

These four dear heads, how joyously
  They laughed! as children only laugh,
While hideous giants stupidly
  Were vanquished by the clever dwarf.

Homer and Ariosto, I
  An epic at the moment wrought,
The while their mother, sitting by,
  Looked at them while they laughed—and thought.

Their grandsire, reading in the shade,
  Oft towards them lifted up his eyes;
Whilst I by the dark window stayed,
  Watching a corner of the skies.

VILLEQUIER, *4th September* 1846.

THREE YEARS AFTER.

THE time is come for me to rest,
Whom doth harsh fate in anguish steep ;
Be all speech else henceforth repress,
Save of the darkness where we sleep.

Wherefore now bid me recommence ?
To hope, to work, alike I cease ;
Of all creation's wealth immense,
Silence alone I ask, and peace.

Why urge me still, thus sorrow-worn ?—
My task and duties all are done :
He who has laboured ere the morn,
Before the sunset may be gone.

At twenty years—Ah ! loss and woe !
My eyes, fixed on the ground I pace,
Have lost the habit long ago
Of seeing my dear Mother's face.

The dark tomb hid her from my sight ;
And well you know that now to-day
I seek, within that dawnless night,
Another Angel fled away.

You know that, mastered by despair,
I struggle with my grief in vain :
A Father now, the pangs I bear,
Of which when young I felt the strain.

You say my work is incomplete !—
Like Adam banished—Eden gone !
The future that my gaze doth greet,
Shows me too well my work is done.

The humble child God snatched away,
By her mere loving, helped me well ;
It was my happiness each day,
To see her eyes upon me dwell.

. . . . . .

Leave me ! rest is my sole desire.
I've ended !—Fate is conqueror.
Why strive you to re-light the fire
In my sad heart, grief-shadowed o'er ?

Still you solicit, and you say,
I must, for duty, reason, right,
Show the blind multitude the way
Towards the horizon's waking light.

That, when at last men rising seem,
The Sage untired pursues his end—
Himself a debt to all who dream,
Himself a debt to all who wend.

That a true soul with ardour fired,
By its own light should speed the pace
Of the expansion long desired,
Long hindered of the human race.

That faithful hearts obey the call,
Unfrighted by the ocean's roar,
Of right's initiate festival,
Of mighty spirits giant war.

You see the tears run down my cheek,
And still you urge and hold me wrong,
As by the arm you shake, and seek
To rouse a man who sleeps too long.

But think what 'tis you do. Ah, woe !
That angel fair, with locks of gold,
When to your feast you bid me go,
May in her silent grave be cold.

Wan, pallid, livid, it may be,
She asks, in her straight bed and still,
"Can Father have forgotten me ?
No longer here ?—I am so chill."

What ? When I now can scarcely bear
The memory of my vacant home—
When, wounded, wearied, I despair,
And seem to hear her saying, "Come."

What ? You can wish me to desire,
Though bowed by blow of sudden fate,
The fame which greets the poet's lyre,
The shouts which on the champion wait.

You wish that I my part should take
In triumphs dear to gilded pride ;
Bid sleepers to the dawn awake,
Bid peoples hope and onward stride.

Mixed in the strife, you wish that I
Foremost amidst the strong should tread,
My eyes uplifted to the sky.—
Ah ! thick the grass grows o'er the dead.

November 1846.

'MID DOUBTS AND RECKONINGS.

'MID doubts and reckonings, while the Mariner
Seeks, from the stars, to find his ocean ways ;
And while the shepherd, with enraptured gaze,

In the thick woods looks for his path and star;
While the astronomer, immersed in rays,

Can million leagues away a globe pursue;—
In heaven's pure space I seek another thing.
But the dark sapphire vault transcends my view;
Nor can we see by night, in robes of blue,
Angels, that cross the sky on silent wing.

August 1847.

A NIGHT RIDE THROUGH THE FOREST.

DEEP black the night, dark was the forest made,
Hermann, who rode beside me, seemed a shade:
Our horses galloped, kept by God from harm;
The sky clouds seemed like marbles to the view,
The stars of heaven through forest branches flew,
As if of flaming birds a swarm.

Full of regrets am I—broken by care;
Hermann's deep soul of every hope is bare.
Full of regrets am I: "O love, sleep well."—
Here, as the wan green branches o'er us wave,
Said he, "I dream of the half-open grave."—
I said, "On graves now closed my musings dwell."

He to the future looks, I to the past.
Our horses galloped through the glade in haste:
The far off Angelus the chill wind bore.
He said, "I dream of those whose lives are pain,
Of those who are and live."—I said again—
"I think of those who are no more."

The fountains sang! What was't the fountains spoke?
The oak was murmuring! What said the oak,
As to old friends the boughs their greetings tell?
Then Hermann said, "No sleep the living catch:
"Even now are eyes that weep, and eyes that watch."—
I said, "Alas! but others sleep too well."

Hermann, once more—"Life is but misery.
The dead grieve not, they happy are; and I
Envy their graves, grown o'er with trees and blooms;
For they are cheered by the soft flames of night,
And on all souls the heavens shed calm delight,
At the same time, in all their tombs."

I said, "Be still! dread this black mystery!
The earth-hid dead, beneath our feet they lie:
The dead are hearts which loved you many a day—
Parents—the angel bride whom late you had—
With bitter irony make them not sad,
As through a dream they harken what we say,"

October 1853.

VENI, VIDI, VIXI.

I HAVE lived long enough, since in my grief
I walk, nor any arm to help is found;
Since I scarce laugh at the dear children round,
Since flowers, henceforth, can give me no relief.

Since in the Spring, when God makes Nature brave,
I see with joyless soul that love so bright;
Since reached the hour when man avoids the light,
And knows the bitterness that all things have.

Since from my soul all hope has passed away ;
  Since, in this month of fragrance and the rose,
  My child ! I wish to share thy dark repose ;
Since, dead my heart, too long in life I stay.

From earth's set task I never sought to fly :
  Ploughed is my furrow, and my harvest o'er.
  Cheerful I lived, and gentle more and more—
Erect, yet prone to bow towards mystery.

I've done my best : with work and watching worn,
  I've seen that many mocked my grieving state ;
  And I have wondered at their causeless hate,
Having much sorrow and much labour borne.

In this world's gaol, where all escape is vain,
  Unmurmuring, bleeding, prostrate 'neath the shock,
  Silent, exhausted, jeered by felon mock,
I've dragged my link of the eternal chain.

Now my tired eyes are but half open kept,
  To turn when I am called is all I can,
  Wearied and stupified, and like a man
Who rises e'er the morn, and ne'er has slept.

Idle through grief, I neither deign nor care
  Notice to take of envy's noisome spite.
  O Lord ! now open me the gates of night,
That I may get me gone, and disappear.

April 1848.

TO-MORROW.

TO-MORROW morn, what time the fields grow white,
I shall set off; I know you look for me,
Across the forest's gloom, the mountain height:
I can no longer dwell away from thee.

I'll walk with eyes upon my thoughts intent,
Hearing no outer noise, seeing no sight;
Alone, unknown, hands clasped, and earthward bent,
Sad, and the day for me shall be as night.

On evening's golden hues I shall not gaze,
Nor on the vessels that to Harfleur come;
But my quest o'er, upon thy grave shall place
A wreath of holly green, and heather bloom.

3rd September 1847.

AT VILLEQUIER.

NOW Paris, with its streets and palaces,
Its fogs and roofs, has vanished from my eyes;
Now that I stand beneath the boughs and trees,
And think upon the beauty of the skies;

Now that from gloom which on my soul had lain,
Pale victor I depart,
And of great Nature feel the power again
Enter into my heart—

Now I have strength, seated by ocean's bound,
Moved by the far horizon, grand and still,
To fathom in myself the truths profound,
And watch the flowers which the meadows fill.

Now, O my God ! I have the calmer woe,
  Able, the while I weep,
To see the stone where, in night, well I know,
  She does for ever sleep.

Now that, made softer by these sights divine,
  Plain, forest, valley, river, rocks, and sky !
Viewing myself, by these vast works of Thine,
  Reason returns before immensity.

Father and Lord, in whom we must believe,
  I come, perverse no more ;
Shreds of the heart Thy glory fills, receive,
  Shattered by Thee of yore.

I come to Thee, O Lord, who art, I know,
  O living God ! good, merciful, and kind.
I own that You alone know what you do,
  That men are reeds that tremble in the wind.

I say the tomb which on the dead is shut
  Opens the Heavenly hall ;
And what we here for end of all things put,
  Is the first step of all.

Now on my knees I own, O Lord august !
  The real, the absolute belong to Thee ;
I own that it is good, I own it just,
  My heart should bleed, since such is God's decree.

Whate'er may happen, I resist no more,
  But with Thy will comply.
The soul, from loss to loss, from shore to shore,
  Rolls to eternity.

We never see more than a single side—
The other plunged in night's dread mystery.
Man feels the yoke : Thou dost the causes hide—
Brief, useless, fleeting, all that meets his eye.

Thou makest a perpetual solitude
Wrap all his steps around.
Thou hast not seen it fit that certitude
Or joy should here be found.

Whatever good he has fate takes away :
Nought can he call his own in life's quick flight,
So that he here can make a home, or say,
Here is my house, my field, or my delight.

All sights he may but for a moment see,
Must age, unhelped, alone,
Since things are thus ; 'tis that they so must be ;
I own it—yes, I own.

Dark is the world ! The changeless harmony,
O God ! of cries, as well as songs, is made.
Man but a speck in dread infinity ;
Night, where the good mount up, and sink the bad.

Thou hast (I know) to do far other things
Than pitying men below :
That the child's death, which the fond mother wrings,
Is nought to Thee, I know.

That fruits must fall beneath the wind I feel,
Flowers lose their scent, and song of birds be hushed ;
That all creation is a mighty wheel,
That cannot move without some being crushed.

Months, days, the ocean waves, and eyes that cry,
Beneath the blue sky go.
'Tis fit the grass should spring, and children die:
O God! all this I know.

Within the skies, beyond the worlds that swarm,
Deep in the azure calm that sleeps afar,
Perchance things we may know not Thou dost form,
For which man's sorrows necessary are.

To plans unnumbered, thou may'st needful find
That beings dear and sweet
Should fly away, snatched by the stormy wind,
Some end of Thine to meet.

Our dismal fates 'neath laws enormous go,
Which nought can disconcert, nought mollify;
Thou canst not interrupting mercies show,
And worlds derange, and Thy calm laws defy.

O God! I do beseech You from aloft
My soul to mark and view;
That, meek as childhood, and as woman soft,
I come to worship You.

Consider that I had, from earliest dawn,
Pondered and battled, laboured, marched, and
fought;
To men displaying Nature else unknown,
And all things with your light have clearly
taught;

And that, confronting bitter hate and rage,
Had done my task below,
And that I could not look for such a wage,
And that I could not know,

That You, too, on the head which I incline,
The weight of your triumphant arm would lay ;
That You, who knew how little joy was mine,
So speedily would snatch my child away.

That souls so struck, their murmurings allow,—
That, uttering blasphemies,
I threw cries at You, as a child might throw
A pebble at the sea.

Consider, Lord, doubt springs from sufferings,
That eyes that weep too long are rendered blind,
That he, whom grief in darkest chasms flings,
When he no more beholds you cannot find ;

That man, when wrecked in fierce affliction's sea,
O'erborne in sorrow's war,
Cannot his soul in calm serenity
Keep, as the cold, fixed star.

To-day, I, who was erst as woman, weak,
Crouch at Your feet before Your open skies—
I feel a light on my dark sorrows break,
As on Your worlds I look with juster eyes.

Lord, now I see the madness of the man,
Who e'er to murmur dares ;
I cease from all reproach, I cease to ban,
But, O, permit me tears.

Ah, from my eyelids let my tears flow down,
Since for this purpose men created were :
Let me still lean over that cold, hard stone,
And ask my child, "Feel you that I am here ?"

Let me speak to her, though, alas! in vain,
Where she in silence lies,
As if, her heavenly eyes unclosed again
That angel heard my cries.

When to the past I turn an envious eye,
Though nothing furnish consolation may,
That moment of my life is ever nigh,
I saw her spread her wings and fly away.

That instant shall I see till I be dead,
When, weeping uselessly,
Frantic, I cried, "The child e'en now I had,
Is she then torn from me?"

O be not angered that I thus remain,
My God, for so long time has bled this wound;
My soul must feel this agonising pain—
Submits, but has not resignation found.

O be not angered: brows which griefs control—
Mortals to tears a prey—
It is not easy to withdraw our soul
From these great pangs away.

Look, Lord! our children are our chief delight.
When we have seen upon our life arise,
'Mid grief, annoys, and troubles, day and night,
And the dark shade that makes our destinies,

A child—a treasure, sanctified and dear—
A being full of joy—
So fair, that, when it came, unclosed appear
The portals of the sky;

When this new self we sixteen years have seen
To loveliest grace, to sweetest reason come ;
When it is known this well-loved child has been
The daylight of our soul and of our home ;

That 'tis the one true pleasure here below,
Of all the dreams we made ;—
Think, 'tis a piteous thing, a piercing blow,
To see it flit and fade !

VILLEQUIER, *September* 4, 1847.

DEATH.

I SAW the reaper toiling far and wide,
Reaping his field with long and speedy stride.
Black skeleton ! Night followed on his track,
While in that shade all trembled and drew back.
The sickle's flash, man followed with his eye ;
The victors 'neath the arch of victory
Fell ; now to a waste he changes Babylon—
Thrones into scaffolds, scaffold into throne,
Makes roses refuse, children, birds or dreams,
Gold turns to cinders, mothers' eyes to streams.
"Give back that little child !" the mothers cry—
"Why make him born, so over soon to die !"
Earth was one sob—high, low, 'twas all the same.
Those bony hands from endless pallets came ;
Cold shivery winds the shrouds unnumbered shook ;
Dazed seemed the people 'neath that fatal hook—
A trembling flock, that in the shade took flight.
All 'neath his feet was mourning, fear, and flight.
—Behind, his brow with gentle flames bathed o'er,
His sheaf of souls a smiling angel bore.

March, 1854.

THE FOUNTAIN AND THE OCEAN.

OVER the cliff the fountain sped,
Drop by drop in the terrible sea:
Ocean—the sailors' fatal dread—
Cried, "Weeper! what dost want with me?

"In me you storm and terror view;
I end where doth the sky commence.
Atom! can I have need of you,
I, who am justly called immense?"

Sweet to the bitter answered back—
"Yet, without noise or fame, I think,
I give one thing, vast sea, you lack—
A drop of water fit to drink."

April 1854.

AT THE FEUILLANTINES.

(CONVENT.)

MY brothers twain and I—mere children at the time—
Our mother bade us play, but told us not to climb
Upon the ladder; nor upon her flowers to tread.

Abel the eldest was, and I myself the least.
We munched our crusts of bread with such amazing zest,
The village women laughed, as we beside them sped.

To play our games, we climbed to the old convent loft,
And there, the while we played, our eyes regarded oft
A book, which on a press seemed inaccessible.

One day we tried, until we reached the great black book.
How 'twas I cannot say, that we the treasure took,
But that a Bible 'twas, this I remember well.

Just like a censer's smell was the old book's perfume.
Rejoiced, at once we sought the corner of the room :
We found it full of prints—what glory and delight !

We spread our precious prize wide open on our knees,
And the first words we read did so our fancy please,
That we went reading on, our games forgetting quite.

Thus we three read and read, till out the morning ran,
Joseph, Ruth, Boaz, and the good Samaritan,
And ever better pleased, at eve, too, read it oft ;

As children who have made some bird of heaven their prize,
Laughing, each other call, with joyous, wondering eyes,
To find beneath their hands how smooth its down and soft.

MARINE TERRACE, *August* 1855.

THOUGHTS UPON THE DUNES.

NOW that my time does like a flambeau waste ;
Now that my tasks are fully wrought ;
Now that my steps to the grave's margin haste,
By years and constant mourning fraught ;

And that, far from the heavens I dreamed, when young,
I see snatched into night away,
Like whirlwind of the past, which speeds along,
So many a glad departed day ;

Now that I say, "To-day we triumph gain,
To-morrow all delusion seems"—
Sadly I walk beside the boundless main,
Bent towards the ground, as one who dreams.

Over the hills and valleys I look forth,
Over the ever-restless seas,
And mark the vulture talons of the north
Bear off as prey the cloudy fleece.

I listen to the rock-beat surf and wind,
And to the reapers as their toil they ply,
Comparing, in my sad and pensive mind,
The sounds of murmuring horror and of joy.

At times I lie stretched out, and never rise,
Upon the scant grass of the moor,
Until I see the moon's ill-omened eyes,
As in a dream, their glances pour.

Rising, she casts a long and sleepy ray
On space, the deep, and mystery;
And we each other with fixt eyes survey—
She shining bright, and I who sigh.

Where, then, have fled away my vanished years?
My face, is there a soul who knows?
Say, in my eyes if one last glance appears,
Which of my life's glad morning shows?

Weary and lone! has all, then, flown away?
I call, none is there to reply!
O wind! O seas! am I but only spray?
Alas! nought but a breath am I!

All that I loved shall I ne'er witness more?
  All glooms in me their dwellings have.
O Earth, whose summits fogs and mists hang o'er,
  Am I a ghost?—art thou the grave?

Have I exhausted all life, love, hope, joy?—
  I ask, implore, I listen, wait;
And lean o'er all my urns to see if I
  Can find one drop my thirst to sate.

How is remorse akin to memory!
  How everything to tears leads back!
How cold, O Death! I feel thy touch when nigh—
  Bolt of life's portal, dread and black.

Then, as I listen to the wind's chill roar,
  And the waves countless ripple on the strand,
I think—yet summer smiles upon this shore,
  And thistles blue—still blossom on the sand!

August 5th 1854.

(Anniversary of arrival in Jersey.)

BELIEVE—BUT NOT IN OURSELVES.

BECAUSE we've ta'en a bit of cloth, or loaf,
  To some poor cottage, 'neath a tottering roof,
Like a nest hid among the wind-blown leaves;
Because we cast the scraps one not perceives
To starving infancy, or agèd woe,
To poverty—God's presence here below;
Because beneath our board we let Christ feed—
We're virtuous, and we praise our bounteous deed!

We cry—"I'm perfect!—laud me!—here I am!"
And while for this or that, great God we blame
For rain, for harm we say by Him is done,
For heat, for cold, *we* claim high heaven as won!
The rich man—idle, gorged, and proud—allows
Some coins to slip from his gilt halls on those
Whom the black winter nips, and famine bites;
That man of wealth, who shines, and gives some mites
From his excess to him who nothing hath;
Who, since the poor some pennies from his path
Pick up, is proud!—blind to his own base plight,
And though o'er rich, lacks the first requisite,
Justice—and laughs the wolf who trots along;
To see called good, mere abstinence from wrong.
We good!—we brotherly! Filth!—rottenness!
But turn your eyes towards Nature's tenderness.
Cold hearts are we, which selfishness constrains
By that vast love, which endless bounty rains.
All our best actions are not worth one rose:
Soon as one grain of kindness we disclose,
We boast. Alas! vain breaths, that flee away
God gives the dawn, nor reckons every ray;
Gives dew to flowers, nor reckons every drop.
We all are nought—our merits well might stop
In hollow of the stone where drinks the bird.
Man—pigmy man!—by giant pride is stirred.
Bounties our hearts dispense with haughty boast,
Absorbed by vanity—are sunk and lost.
E'en when we help the poor with accents mild,
Still pride is there, and all our gold defiled:
Spectral, as we ourselves, the good we do.
God, who alone is living, dread, kind, true—
Who judges, loves, forgives, constructs, destroys—
Beholds our loftiest acts with pitying eyes.

O quickly fleeting ! your own help disown—
Think—live upon your knees—trust God alone ;
Try to be wise, meek, good, with anxious care,
Nor take one step which is not propt by prayer ;
For our perfections will but little shine,
When dead, before the stars and skies divine.
God only saves us ; and 'tis vain to dream
Our earthly sparks can in high heaven beam,
Radiant, as seemed he to our darkened sight ;
Good, to our hearts unformed to judge aright.
Whate'er his deeds, he whom on earth we scan
As just, good, pure, wise, great, is there but man—
That is, mere darkness to the light above ;
His love, mere hate—placed by that boundless love ;
And all his splendours, in remorseful fright,
Exclaim, on seeing God—" We are but night."
God is the only sky the world can need :
Atoms and space are in this text agreed.
God only great, the humble flowerets name,
God only true, the mighty floods proclaim,
God only good, winds tell, from spot to spot.
O man ! let idle vaunts deceive you not !
Whence did you spring, to think that you can be
Better than God, who made the stars and sea ?
And who awakes you when your rest is done,
With that prodigious smile of love—the sun ?

MARINE TERRACE, *December* 1851.

TO HER WHO REMAINS IN FRANCE.

(EXTRACTS.)

ERST when September steeped in tears came back,
My friends all left, I trod the dismal track.
I fled—the stir, the life of Paris lost ;
I went—no mortal but a shuddering ghost.
I sped alone, without sight, thought, or speech,
Well knowing I the fated spot should reach.
Alas ! no words could my deep anguish sound.
Like one attracted by some gulf profound,
Whether the way was wet, cold, good, or bad,
I knew not, marching till the goal was had ;
O memories ! O dread hills, where woes abide !
And while her mother and her sister cried
In the lone home, I sought the dark recess,
Gloom-wrapt, with all-despairing eagerness.
Next the sad field beside the church I find,
Bare headed, slow, hair floating to the wind ;
As I drew near, my gaze fixed on the sky,
The trees low murmured—"Comes the Father nigh ?"
Brambles divide their boughs, nor cause delay ;
O'er many a fallen cross I make my way.
Some fond funereal words my anguish found,
Then, 'mid the shrubs, I knelt upon the ground,
On the white stone round which green mosses creep.—
Ah ! why so still thine unresponsive sleep ?
That when I call you never hear me cry !
And fishermen with trailing nets passed by, [lone ?"
And said—"Who is that man, thought-wrapt and
And day and eve, and shadows lengthy grown,
And Venus, which long time had shone o'erhead,
The while I lingered waiting—all were fled !
Praying to Him who listens when we crave,
I worshipped, letting fall upon the grave

Where I had seen my heavens all disappear,
My whole heart, drop by drop, in silent tear.
I plucked leaves one by one, and sadly smiled,
As I remembered, when a little child—
When she would bring me lilies, pinks, and when
She in her little fingers took my pen,
Gay, laughing to have inked her rosy hand.
I breathed the flowers which on that dust expand ;
I fixed my gaze on the turf, cold and green,
And thought, O Lord ! one moment to have seen.
Through the grave's stone, her soul emit a flame.

Yes, when that hour which doth my mourning claim,
Stained the sad sky, and wrung my bleeding heart,
Nought kept me from her ; free I could depart.
But now—ah, me !—stream, valley, wood, repose
Where I oft sought—'Tis not my fault, she knows,
If since four wretched years I have not come,
Poor torchless heart, to pray beside her tomb.

Thus that black road, the slab I used to see
With tear-worn eyes, pale, leaning 'gainst a tree,
That silent grave, my feet have often prest ;
The gathering night I watched the scene invest—
That yew, that twilight, and that churchyard lone ;
Those tears, that fall at least upon her stone—
All this, my God, some solace could afford.

Tell me what have you done the while ? O Lord !
What has she done ? Can you, where now you dwell,
See life ? What shadowy clock the time doth tell ?
Did you the other sleeper gently shake ?
Did you, while waiting my approach, half wake
And pale, press 'gainst the window which descries
Infinity, and seek to recognise,

Between the coffins' chinks, some passer by,
Listening if some one you could not descry
Approaching in the gloom eternal, vast?
Then sank you back, as falls the broken mast,
Crying, "What, then, my Father does not come?"
Have you both whispered of me in your tomb?

How oft dew-sprinkled lilies have I sought—
Lilies both of my garden and my thought;
How often of the white-thorn plucked the flower
Down there; how often sought for Harfleur's tower,
And murmured, "'Tis to-morrow I shall start;"
And reckoned wind and speed with absent heart.
Then my hand opened, and, appalled, I said,
While dropt the nosegay—"All are gone and dead!"
How oft aware she must my presence crave,
I searched my heart for the best gift I have,
And to one thither-bound the message gave.

GUERNSEY, *November* 2, 1855.

(All Souls' Day.)

From THE LEGEND OF THE AGES.

1859–1883.

[In the Epilogue of the second series of the "Lègende des Siècles," the poet, in forcible verses, tells the reader, "*Whence came this Book?*" He had before, in the preface to the first series, explained at some length the end and aim of these poems; but the following paragraph, taken from it, will suffice to show his intention:—"These poems," he says, "are nothing but a succession of imprints of the human profile, epoch after epoch, from the time of Eve, the mother of men, to that of Revolution, the mother of peoples. Imprints, taken sometimes from barbarism, sometimes from civilization, more often than not from history, moulded on the mask of the ages."]

EXTRACTS FROM "WHENCE CAME THIS BOOK?"

THE wall of ages in my dream appeared
Of living flesh, and granite rocks upreared:
Fixed immobility by sorrows made!
A building which loud sounds of crowds invade—
Black holes, star-lighted by ferocious eyes,
Mutations strange of grouped monstrosities,
Vast statues, giant frescoes met the view.
At times the gaping wall showed chambers through;

Dens, where there sat the happy and the great,
Victors, crime-stained, with praise intoxicate;
Gilt rooms, of jasper and of porphyry;
And the wall shivered as a wind-blown tree
All ages, crowned with coin or battlement,
Were there; wan sphinxes, o'er the riddle bent,
Each sat as vaguely living, then was lost
To sight in upper darkness—as a host
Together with its captain petrified.
Soon as to scale the realms of night I tried,
The mass swayed to and fro, as 'twere a cloud:
At once it was a wall, and was a crowd.
The marble clutched the sceptre and the sword,
And wept the dust, and the red blood was poured.
In human shape fell every shattered stone—
Man, with th' unknown breath that leads him on,
Eve, Adam floating, one and yet diverse,
Throbbed on the wall, and life, and universe,
And Fate—black thread that does the tomb divide.—
Lightning at times made on the wall's wan side
Millions of faces, of a sudden flame; [name—
Then showed that Nothing, which the whole we
Kings, Gods, Law, Glory, and the flow and fate,
Through every time and age, of man's estate;
And 'neath my sight stretched out the dismal tale
Of hunger, ignorance, plagues, wars, and wail;
And superstition, science, history,
Like a black screen, as far as eye can see.
That wall, built of black ruin, bleak and bare,
Reared itself rugged, mournful, shapeless, where
I know not—hid in darkness far away.

There are no mists, as nought in Algebra,
Which can resist in numbers, or in skies,
The fixed, calm search of penetrating eyes.

This wall, which to my sight, as first I mused,
Seemed shifting as a wave, vague and confused,
Illusive, vaprous, giddy, full of change ;
Yet 'neath my thoughtful gaze the vision strange
Grew clearer and less dim, as by degrees
My pupils scanned the scene with greater ease.

. . . . . .

How then shall we describe this book aright—
Drawn from the Past, the Tomb, the Gulf, the Night?
'Tis the tradition which the tempest feeds
Of revolutions, God unchains and speeds—
After the earthquake shock, what still stands fixt,
A wreck, but with the future's vague dawn mixt,
Man's onward growth, the ruin of old times,
Which darkness fills, and poetry sublimes.
Palatial charnel-house, in ruined state,
Inhabited by death and built by fate,
Wherein, when not by numbing fear possessed,
As birds on wing, or passing sunbeams rest,
Life, Liberty, and Hope, their own may keep—
'Tis the immeasurable tragic heap,
Where, in its hideous breach do vipers glide,
And dragons, ere they in their caverns hide,
And mists before they back to Heaven won.
This book is the dread wreck of Babylon,
The gloomy tower of things, the home concise
Of right, wrong, mourning, tears, and sacrifice ;
Once proud, and ruling o'er horizons far,
Now having nought but blocks that hideous are,
Scattered in the dark valley, lost and laid,
It is man's epic—harsh, immense—decayed.

GUERNSEY, *April* 1857.

FROM EVIRADNUS.

IN those vast halls the hero stands alone ;
Then to the table he draws near, whereon
Glasses and cups, gilt-painted, great and small,
Displayed for diverse wines, are diverse all.
He thirsts, the flagons tempt his lips—but No !
The drops left in the empty goblets show
That mortal men still tread this chamber floor—
On to the mounted steeds ; he stops before
The first, who brilliant in his armour shows
He takes the knight, and from his saddle throws.
In vain the steel its livid lightnings cast.
He clasped the iron phantom, held it fast,
Dragged to the hall's most gloomy nook, and placed
In dark and dust the panoply disgraced,
Leant 'gainst the wall, like warriors forced to yield.
Now Eviradnus takes his lance and shield,
Mounts in his place,—a statue as of stone,
Like all the rest, rigid, his vizor down.
No breath, no sounds his fast locked lips forsake ;
His form the grave for its own prey might take.

All silence-wrapt, is that dread hall of fear

Listen ! as murmurs from hid nests, we hear
Laughter and voices, all confused, draw nigh,
With steps from the deep forest's canopy—
And now, from out the forest dark and still,
Which does the moon's vast dreamy twilight fill
Quivering you hear, and thrilling languidly,
And passing to the trees its gentle sigh.
The Zithern of the Innsbruck Alps revealed
By the small pebble in its board concealed,

With this a man's voice mingles, and the sound
Takes sense and form, till a vague song be found.

A Little Music.

Shall we frame a vision gay,
  Mount our coursers fleet and good,
Carried off—you lead the way,
  Birds are singing in the wood.

Slave and master both am I.
  Start ! the moon appears above,
My horse shall be christened Joy,
  And your palfrey shall be Love.

All the time their heads shall meet ;
  Ride like this is void of care,
Kisses they shall have to eat,
  Reckless of all coarser fare.

Come, our magic horses seem
  To paw the ground impatiently ;
Mine in mazes of my dream,
  Yours from visions of the sky.

Some provision we must make,
  Wealth of vows then let us bear ;
All our joys and sorrows take,
  And a flower from your hair.

Evening all the forest stains ;
  Sparrows laugh with mocking start
At the rattle of the chains,
  That you fasten round my heart.

Not through me shall it betide,
If the mountain and the grove,
As they see us side by side,
Do not gently whisper love.

Come—be tender—drunk, am I—
O, these green and dewy bowers!
Thee, the painted butterfly
Follows, as the scent of flowers.

See, the owl with envy turns,
Opens his round eyes the while,
And the nymphs bent o'er their urns,
In their grottoes, kindly smile.

They shall say, "What are we at?
Hero and Leander they—
While we listen to their chat,
All our fountains flow away."

Ride we towards the Austrian State,
There the dawn shall meet our brow;
You'll be rich, and I be great,
Since we love each other now.

Through all regions let us hie,
On our twice enchanted steeds;
Through fairyland and mystery,
With the madness loving breeds.

At some Inn we stop the while,
And the landlord there we pay:
You with your sweet virgin smile,
I with scholar's frank good day.

Lady, you ! I baron bold !
Come, my heart is glad and bright—
Come, and let our tale be told,
'Neath the stars that gem the night.

Some moments more, the melody remains
'Neath the blue tinted trees, the calm moon stains,
Then trembles, then expires—The singer's trill
Is hushed as a bird settles—All is still.

SULTAN MURAD.

I.

A MAN was Murad Son of Bajazet,
Than all Rome's emperors more glorious yet.
Fierce Lions his Seraglios watched before
Murad with murdered victims spread the floor.
White bleaching bones between the flags you meet,
Long streams of blood ran 'neath his sandalled feet,
Flooding the earth, o'er all the east they past,
And to the west their smoke and shadow cast.
Such carnage with his scimitar he wrought,
His horse a panther by the world was thought.
Smyrna and Tunis which their Beys regret,
Like dismal corpses were on gibbets set
Sublime ! The Caucasus by force and ruse,
And Libanus from Kirghis and the Druse
He took. Her chiefs, when Ephesus he sacked,
He hung—and all the priests of Patras racked.
Through Murad's victories, that widely reek,
The vulture wipes his gore-bedabbled beak,
Upon the jutting beams of Theseus' fane,
And wolves in Athens' street unscared remain.

The bramble clothes with green, and ivy crawls
On all those ancient desolated walls.
Tyre, Argos, Corinth, Varna cast to ground,
All mute—where echo gives the only sound—
Murad's a saint,—he strangled brothers eight,
For the last two, yet small, he chose to wait.
And let them round the room (in ghastly fun),
To seek their wretched mother's succour, run.
Murad 'mid crowds he bade to feasting; sped
His sabre in his hand, and many a head
Flew from its trunk; as bird from off the spray.
Ancyra, Delphi, Naxos ruined lay.
Whole countries like ripe fruit he down will strike,
People and princes he destroyed alike,
Temples, and Gods, and palaces, and kings—
Water no greater swarms of insects brings,
Than ghosts of slaughtered kings, and spectres grim,
Around his spears unnumbered, followed him.
Murad of Conquering Sultans, starry Son—
Ripped up twelve living children, one by one,
A stolen apple in them to detect.
Murad was great—he Famagusta wrecked;
Hilla and Megara, by Allah's aid,
Destroyed Girgente, in their ashes laid
Fiume and Rhodes; white slaves his harem needs.
Sawed 'twixt two planks of cedar, Achmet bleeds,
Such honour to his uncle's rank he gives.
Murad was wise—too long his father lives,
So helped him off: his wives he left behind,
Daughters of Europe, in whose eyes flashed mind,
Or Tiflis girls, with bosoms white to view,
All to the waves the Sultan Murad threw,
In sacks convulsed, which th' unfathomed tide
Swept off, still struggling 'neath the ocean wide.
His law was to drown all, and for reply,

When by some santon he was questioned why,
"Because the women were with child," he cried.
Aden and Erzroom he made ditches wide,
Modon a graveyard, and three heaps of dead
Aleppo, Brusa, and Damascus laid;
Once his own son before his arrows fell,
As target used. He was invincible.
One Vlad refused his tribute: he they dub
(I mean the Chief of Tunis) Beelzebub:
Who the Turk's envoys took—impaled them straight
Each side the road, before the city gate.
On Murad came, burnt harvests, barns, and then
The Boyard conquered; twenty thousand men
Prisoners of war he took, compelled to yield:
Next a vast wall built round the battlefield.
The twenty thousand men in embrasures,
Whence issue shrieks of torment, he immures;
For every victim's eyes he made a slit,
And, when he left, upon the wall he writ—
"Stone-carver Murad to stake-planter Vlad."
Strong faith the Sultan and devotion had.
Once in Eubœa, where his lightning came,
He gave a hundred convents to the flame.
Murad, for forty years dread homicide,
Slaughtered mankind: God seemed with him to bide.
He was supreme unnumbered armies o'er—
Was Caliph, Padishah, and Emperor.
"Great is Murad!" the priesthood shout the while.

II.

Bad legislator, conqueror yet more vile,
Having around him only abject troops,
Slaves, and the crowd that in the mire stoops,
Souls tongued to lick his feet which hiding hate
Praised him for crimes, always inexpiate.

Flattered, embraced by conquered enemies,
He lived immersed in incense, pride, and joys,
With the vast weariness of worshipped wrong.

Earth was the meadow—he the mower strong.

III.

One day at Bagdad as on foot he sped,
And the mean herd beheld his awful head :
What time the houses, trees, and tender sprays,
Throw on the streets, oppressed by sober rays,
A fringe of shade on a large space of light.
By threshold of a cottage met his sight
A fœtid pig (whom had a butcher bled
Before he cut his throat) stretched out half dead.
The beast lay gasping, tortured on the ground,
His neck gaped open with a frightful wound.
The mid-day sun burnt up the dying boar,
And in the deep black gash, of which the gore
Close by the stall produced a smoking lake.
Each ray like red hot steel did stab and ache,
As if at the sun's invitation sped,
Hundreds of flies that sucked the edges red,
And as around their nests doves go and come,
So flew these parasites that haunt the tomb ;
Their feet in blood, their wings stretched to the ray,
For death, and agony, and fell decay,
On earth the sole mysterious evils are,
Where with the sun, flies the same labour share.
The pig, who could not move, in torture lies,
'Neath the fierce sun—devoured by the flies.
Quivering with pain, the hideous wound was seen.
All passers-by fled from the beast unclean.
Who then of this foul woe would pity own ?

The Sultan and the pig were left alone !
One tortured, dying, cursed, infected, foul ;
One, monarch, conqueror, did the world control,
Triumphant high as mortal man can mount—
As if the gods had chosen to confront
The two extremities of gloom and woe.
The pig, who shuddered bones and marrow through,
Groaned agonized, worn out. Murad drew near
That bleeding shapeless thing, a sight of fear ;
And as at some deep gulf you stay your foot,
He bent his head over the leprous brute,
Then with his foot in the cool shade he pushed ;
And with the gesture with which kings he crushed,
Transcendent, Murad scared away the flies.
The dying pig opened his savage eyes,
One moment fixed ineffably his look
On him, who of his anguish pity took,
Then sunk his eyes in mystery profound,
And died.

IV.

The day this on our mortal ground
Took place, what happened in the heaven was this :
'Twas in the solemn realm of calm and bliss,
Where light ideal 'neath th' ideal shade
Shines, and life, time, and age are past and fade ;
Beyond what we call space—beyond the flight
Of dreams, which we below, call day and night—
Place which to souls true sight of causes brings,
When viewing the now hidden side of things
You comprehend ; and say 'Tis well,—forsooth
Dark Error's other hidden side, is Truth—
Chaste and white realm, where ill and darkuess fade
And in whose splendour stars are drops of shade.

For what shines there is not our futile day
Of tears and laughter, birth and swift decay,
Shifting, then entering back its former night;
And like our dawn, merely a sob of light;
'Tis a divine vast day, and in the skies
By suns beheld, as in our own by eyes:
Pure day, which secrets howe'er deep can ope,
Day that would fright, but that itself is Hope;
Illuminating all the stretch of space;
Lightning, by awfulness—yet dawn by grace—
All beauties there with thunders dread combine,
Light passing thought, and shuddering glory shine;
The risen from the grave fix their blest sight,
On lightning splendours of the infinite.—
There billowy rays, like waves each other chased;
'Twas on Creation's Sinai's summit placed.

The cloud was seen at moments to divide,
And dazzling brightness cast on every side
Unfathomed depths that awful peak surround.

And the soul felt with trembling dread profound,
Being past thought or words, in gulfs of light—
All things created shuddered—morn and night,
Angels and stars, each greatest, highest thing—
Before the presence of th' invisible King,
Th' Almighty.

He who made and blesses all,
He whom with stammering lips we Spirit, call,
Goodness, Perfection, Justice, Wisdom, Force—
Beholds for aye, in their appointed course,
In timeless, passionless tranquillity,
Ages like flies in summer heat pass by.
A gulf—the earth—in darkness, groans, and fear;

Far down by thickest mists o'erspread that sphere
Crept—world of gloom ! where the frail human bands
Past by and perished, as they wrung their hands.
India and Nile you saw, battles and frays,
Exterminations, cities in a blaze ;
And ravaged fields, war trumpets far and wide,
Europe aghast, a sword aimed at its side ;
Vapours from tombs, and glare from caverns lone,
Eight brothers slain, and uncle, father, son ;
Armies walled up rotting while living still,
Heads flying thick as bats that twilight fill ;
Round a drawn sword fruitful of death and wrath,
Ript children with their entrails gushing forth.
Huge stakes here smoked, there bodies close at hand,
In fragments sawed, mixed with the burning brand,
And the vast shrouder of laments and wail,
The ocean, stranded in its billows pale
Frightful black sacks, to struggle seen and writhe.
Crowds of wan brows, and many a fugitive.
Eyes weeping ; worms, and bones of slaughtered hosts,
Whirlwinds of misty spectres, and the ghosts
Shaking their shrouds—and all those bleeding dead,
From land to land in hideous chaos spread ;
Impaled, to crosses nailed, to hurdles tied,
Showing their fetters, blood, wounds, tortures, cried,
"'Tis Murad, justice Lord, we all implore !"
And at that cry, which from all quarters bore
The wind, the thunder, threats terrific, cast
And flames of wrath o'er angel faces past,
The bars of hell grew red—and heaven saw
Hell's bolts through fury, of themselves withdraw ;
And from the fathomless abyss you see
A hand stretch forth which opened terribly.
Justice repeats the gloom, and punishment
From th' Infinite was being slowly sent—

When sudden, on the cloud, from deepest night
A beast deformed, worn out, a hideous sight,
An abject, piteous thing, a pig was shown,
With bleeding eyes it searched for Allah's throne,
The cloud conveyed the pig to heaven's shine,
And placed him e'en where glows the one great shrine.
The Holy of Holies, where no change can be,
And the pig said—"Pardon—he succoured me."
The wretched beast met the Creator's gaze.
Then, by the law which hastens or delays
His sentence, who by his mysterious might,
Makes dawn in darkness, and in day makes night,
You saw, in mists where shape distinctive fails,
Confusedly appear enormous scales.
The balance of itself comes on, and flies
Past Hell wide gaping, and half open skies;
And 'neath the crowd immense of victims stood,
Where the vast depths of night and silence brood—
The Eternal eye, the only Great and True
Beholds, as balanced there it bore in view,
In light mysterious now flashed, now furled
In the two scales, the pig against the world.

The scale which held the pig the balance bent.

V.

Murad, the mighty Caliph, as he went
From out the street whose wondering crowds had seen
Their dreaded tyrant touch the beast unclean,
That eve a fever caught—ere morn was dead.

The Sultan's tomb of unwrought jasper made,
All gemmed—the entrance would beholders strike,
As the inside of some vast creature like,
All covered o'er with gold and diamond.
This shrine, all other richest shrine beyond,

Bristled as arrows in a quiver thick,
With towers above its walls of sunburnt brick.
That tomb which Bagdad e'en at present shows,
Received the Sultan, and did o'er him close.

When there, and he lay stretched beneath the stone,
Opening his eyes he saw a light that shone,
Which seemed not, or from day or torch to come,
A dazzling splendour filled the entire tomb.
Darkness, to soft glad dawn, began to change,
And his quenched eye felt a renewal strange.
A door regained for day, opening in night;
And the enormous ladder met his sight,
Which takes men's deeds to the soul-seeing eye.

Radiance of flames and roses did descry,
Then upon Murad's ear these words descend:—
"O Murad, son of Bajazet, attend;
You seemed for ever lost, your guilty soul
One ulcer, your whole life did crime control,
You foundered among those submerged by sin.
Already Satan showed your soul within,
Condemned to join the dismal whirlwind's flight
Of spectres, driven through the vaults of night;
You bore the wings of darkness on your back,
Hell listened for your footsteps in her track—
Drawn by your crimes, the blackness of the pit
Rose round you, as do mists o'er marshes flit,
You leant above the gulf where man is lost.
But, wretch! your soul a flash of pity crost;
Blest glow! (where selfishness had ne'er a part),
Unknown e'en by yourself, possessed your heart,
I made you die, while right assumed her reign;
Salvation e'en the cruel can regain,
E'en bloodiest murderer, and worst of lords,
Who the least help, to the least man affords—

One moment's love, wins Eden repossest ;
Help to a pig outweighs a world opprest,
Come, heaven opens where all glories dwell,
And thrills with joy for him who 'scapes from hell.
Come, you were good one day, be ever blest ;
Enter, transfigured, late by crimes possest,
King ! By heaven's splendours they are all effaced,
By spotless white see your black wings replaced."

POOR FOLK.

I.

'TIS night, the hut, though poor, keeps out the wind ;
The room is dark, yet something there you find
Which like a ray amid the twilight falls ;
The fishing-nets are hung about the walls,
And in a nook, where pots and plates in line
Upon a cupboard shelf obscurely shine,
Stands a large bed, with curtains hung around,
Hard by a mattress spread upon the ground,
Where, like a nest of souls, five children sleep ;
The hearth, where ashes still some fire keep,
On bed and ceiling cast a reddish ray ;
A woman, thoughtful, pale, kneels down to pray :
Their mother. She's alone ; and out of doors
The ocean, white with foam, its wailing pours
To sky, night, rock, to howling winds and wild.

II.

The man's at sea ; a sailor from a child,
With gloomy chance doth a fierce war sustain :
For he must be afloat in squall and rain.

The children cry for food, and off he hies
At eve, when billows to the gunwale rise.
Unhelped, alone, his bark he steers and tends.
Meanwhile, the wife at home the canvas mends,
Fits on the hooks, the broken nets repairs,
And for the fish-soup in the cauldron cares.
Then prays to God, while the five children sleep.
He, tossed upon the ever-rolling deep,
Fares on the boundless main, and through the night,
Hard toil, in cold and blackness, void of light;
Mid breakers, where the frantic billows race.
In the broad sea is the best fishing place,
Uncertain, dark, capricious, apt to change,
Where fish with silver fins delight to range.
This spot, as their own room scarce twice as wide,
In a December night, mid fog and tide,
Upon the shifting wilderness to find
How must he currents calculate and wind!
What plans—what skilful reckonings it takes!
The waves glide by his boat like glassy snakes,
The gulf rolls on, and bursts its mighty folds,
The rigging creaks, and strains, and barely holds.
He thinks of Jeanne while icy billows toss—
She weeps and calls on him. So speed and cross
Each night their thoughts, those soul birds through the skies.

III.

She prays. The gull, with its harsh, mocking cries,
Scares her; and 'mid the rocks, shattered by storms,
The ocean fills her with dismay. Strange forms
Pass thro' her mind. The sailors on the sea
Who swept across the furious billows be,
And in its case, like blood in th' artery,
The cold clock ticks, casting in mystery

Drop after drop, time, winter, summer's heat,
And in the boundless world each several beat
Opens to souls, that hawks or doves become,
On either side the cradle and the tomb.

She thinks and dreams. "What poverty we know!
Barefoot the children e'en in winter go!
Black bread alone and never white we taste!
O God!" The wind roars like a furnace blast.
The coast sounds like an anvil, and you see
In the black storm the constellations flee,
Like clouds of sparks that from the hearth arise.
It is the hour, midnight (gay dancer) plies
Folly's wild game, with mask and glances glad;
It is the hour, midnight (dark brigand) clad
In shade and rain, and in the stormy north,
Takes the poor shivering sailor, and hurls forth
And breaks on monstrous rocks that ocean crown.
Horror! the man whose voice the waters drown
Feels rent and wrecked his vessel as it sinks;
Feels 'neath him gape th' abyss and night; and thinks
On the old iron ring, of the safe quay.

These gloomy visions wring her heart, and she
Trembles, dismayed, and weeps.

IV.

O wretched wives
Of sailors! Dreadful 'tis to say, "My lives—
Father, Sons, Brothers, Lover—all most dear
My heart, blood, flesh, are in that chaos there."
Waves like wild beasts devour their human prey.
O God, that waves with such dear heads should play!
With husband, master, and the shipboy child.
That the wan wind, blowing its clarions wild,

Unknits above them his long, haggard hair ;
And that, perhaps, e'en now such woes they bear,
And that one ne'er is sure how they may be,
And that for guard against the boundless sea,
Against the gulf of night, where shines no star,
A plank, a sail, their sole protections are.
Dark Care ! They run across the shingly track ;
The tide mounts, and they cry, "Give me them back."
Vain words, alas ! What answer can be brought,
From the storm-tumbled sea, to anxious thought.

Jeanne's heart is torn.—Her husband helped by none
In that fierce night ; 'neath that black shroud alone !
Too young the boys to help. "Would strong they were"
The mother cries, "their father's toil to share ;"
One day, when with their father, you will plain,
Weeping fast tears, "Would they were young again."

V.

Lantern and cloak she takes : 'tis time to learn
If the sea calms—if yet he may return—
If breaks the dawn—and if the signal shows.
She starts ! not yet the breeze of morning blows ;
Nought can be seen, no single line of white,
In all the gathered blackness of the night.
It rains—nothing more black than morning rain ;
'Tis as though day with trembling doubt was ta'en,
And dawn, like infants weeps and wails at birth,
No light from any window shines, or hearth.

Struck all at once her eyes, that seek the way,
A sight that presaged undefined dismay—
A gloomy hovel, ruined all, and waste ;
No light ! no fire ! the door sways in the blast ;
The roof hung tottering on the mouldy walls,
And rent the hideous thatch by northern squalls—

The straw foul, yellow, as when waters rot.
"Hold! this poor widow I had clean forgot!
Ill and alone," she cries, "my husband late
Found her. I needs must go and see her state."
She raps and listens, but none answer there,
And Jeannette shivers in the cold sea air.
"Sick, and her hungry children! What distress!
She has but two, but she is husbandless."
She raps again.—"Ho! neighbour! answer me."
The house is silent still.—"Ah God," says she,
"How sound she sleeps—in vain I knock and cry;"
But then the door, by some deep mystery,
As though inanimate things could pity feel,
Opened itself, its secret to reveal.

VI.

She entered; then her lamp its light shed o'er
The dark dumb house, beside the sounding shore.
Rain torrents through the ceiling forced their way.

At the room's end a dreadful object lay—
A woman, ghastly, still, stretched out, who had
Bare feet, glazed sightless eyes, and scarce was clad—
A corpse, once a strong happy mother—now
Dishevelled spectre of dead want and woe—
All the poor leave, after their long hard fight.
Half hid upon the straw, and half in sight,
Her livid arm, her hand already green,
Hung down, and horror sped those lips between
Whence had the fleeting soul that bitter cry
Of death thrown forth—heard by eternity.

Close to the bed their mother lay upon,
Two babes, a little daughter and a son,
In the same cot slumbered with peaceful smile.
The mother, feeling death's approach the while,

Her shawl, her gown, upon the children flings,
That in the shadow which death's presence brings,
Decay of heat she might from them withold,
And they be warm, while she herself grew cold.

VII.

How in their cradle sleep they both ; and how
Their breathing peaceful is, and calm their brow.
Seems it as nought those orphans' sleep could fray—
Not e'en the trumpet of the judgment day ;
For, blameless, they dare stand the Judge before.

The rain abroad does like a deluge pour :
From the rent ceiling, which admits the squall,
At times a drop does on that dead brow fall,
And gliding to the cheek, becomes a tear.
The surge like an alarum clock you hear.—
Listens the dead, as if of sense bereft ;
For bodies, when the radiant soul has left,
Seem the departed one to seek and reach ;—
You think to hear the interchange of speech
Twixt the pale mouth, and eyes that sightless stare :
Where is my breath, and thou, thy glances where ?

Live, love, and pick the primroses. Alas !
Dance, laugh, inflame your heart, and drain your glass.
As every brook to the dark ocean flows,
One end to feast and cradle, fate bestows,
For mother's worshipping their children's bloom,
To kisses which the raptured heart consume,
To songs, to smiles, to love so fair and brave—
—The melancholy chilling of the grave.

VIII.

What is Jeanne doing in that house of death ?
What in her cloak's wide folds hides she beneath ?

What, as she goes away, does Jeannette take?
Why beats her heart, and steps unsteady quake?
Why hurry thus, and running like the wind,
Seeks her own cot, and dares not look behind?
What with so scared a look does she conceal,
In darkness on her bed?—What does she steal?

IX.

When reached her house, the cliffs more white appear,
And close beside her bed she took a chair.
Pale she sat down, self-blamed you would have said,
To see her in the pillow hide her head.
At times her lips uttered some broken speech—
Afar the fierce sea roars upon the beach—

"My poor, good man! O God! what will he say?
So full of cares! What have I done to-day?
Five children on his hands—and labours so!
Had he not toil enough, that I must go
And add all this? 'Tis he.—My fault I own,
And if he beat me, it were rightly done.
'Tis he! No! Well! Yet seemed to move the door,
As though he came. See! what ne'er was before—
I fear to see my good man come again."
Thus did she saddened and in thought remain,
Plunging more deep in grief, and anguish tost,
In endless cares as in abysses lost.
She now not even hears the noise without,
Of cormorants, that like black criers shout,
Aud fury of the winds, and waves, and tide.

With sudden clasp the door flies open wide,
And rays of light within the cabin lets;
The fisherman, hauling in his dripping nets,
Appeared, right glad, and said, "Your sailor's here."

X.

"'Tis thou," cried Jeanne. And to her breast as near
Her husband clasped as lovers wont to strain ;
And warmly kissed, all soaked with seas and rain,
The while he said—"Yes, wife, I'm here!" and showed,
In his frank brow, on which the embers glowed,
How pleased he was that safe with Jeanne he stood.
"I'm robbed," he cried ; "the sea 's a brigand wood."
"What weather was it?" "Bad!" "What fishing?"
"Bad!
But now I kiss you, and that makes me glad.
I've nothing caught at all, my net is torn ;—
The devil surely in the wind was borne.
What night!—in such a storm I could but think,
As snapt my cable, that the boat would sink.
And thou, what wast thou doing all the while?"
Jeanne shuddered—at a loss—unused to guile.
"I," said she ; "just as usual—nothing more ;
I sewed, and heard the sea like thunder roar.
I feared—the winter's cold—'tis all the same."
She trembled like to one who feels to blame ;
Then added—"By-the-bye, our neighbour's dead.
She died—no matter—yesterday, 'tis said,
At eve—after you started for the night.
She leaves behind two children—babies quite.
One is called William, and one Madeleine ;
He cannot walk, she scarcely prattles plain.
The poor good soul great want had struggled through."

The man looked grave, and in the corner threw
His navy cap, all drenched ; and, as he sat, [pate.
"The devil!" twice exclaimed—and scratched his
"We had five children ; this will seven make :
Already in bad times we'd nought to take

For supper, now and then: what to do now?
Worse luck, 'tis not my fault! And, anyhow,
'Tis the good God's concern. These be strange haps.
Why did He take the mother from these scraps,
No bigger than my fist?—such haps be rude,
And need book-learning to be understood.
So small, you cannot say—'To work betake.'
Wife, go and fetch them—if they're now awake,
Alone and with the dead—how great their fear!
Their mother rapping at the door we hear.
Let's open to her babes—we'll mix them all;
Upon our knees, at even, shall they crawl,
Brother and sister to our other five;
And when He sees we must for all contrive—
For the small girl, and this small boy as well—
Kind God with larger draughts my nets will swell.
For me, I'll doubly work—and water drink.—
'Tis said: go fetch them;—but you're loath, I think.
In general you run more quickly far."—

She drew the curtain—"Husband! here they are."

THE FALLS.

NIAGARA—Rhine—dash down with foaming wave,
The monstrous gulf, would fain become their grave.
It hates the giant river, and declares—
"I'll swallow it." The stream (as unawares
A lion in a hydra's den may roam)
Struggles with all its sound, and storm, and foam
What then; vast Nature's self untrusty is!—
It rears, it shuns the deep dark precipice;

It foams and boils, as marble white and black,
Cleaves to the rocks, and by the trees holds back ;
Leans, and as if by some fell fiend controlled,
Rolls over, as th' undying Ixion rolled ;—
Twisted, torn conquered, God permitting it,
The shattered stream does to its pangs submit :
The gulf would kill it, but its force and hate
May choas form, but cannot uncreate.
The frightful pit of hell opes its dark jaws,
And raves,—what toil ! darkness and death to cause.
It is destruction, envy, rage, and night ;
These are the works, the produce of its might.
As smoke upon Vesuvius summit rests,
A gloomy cloud that cauldron vast invests,
And hides the torments of the mighty stream.
This—the wealth-giver wherefore hateful deem ?
What has it done to forest, mountain, field,
That to the abyss they all its life would yield ?
Its splendour, beauty, goodness, strength, all be
Destroyed ?—what infamy, what treachery !
Like bladder filled with wind, the waters swell ;
Horror disperses its despairing knell ;
Engulphment, darkness, shipwreck, all destroys ;
You'd say a frightful laugh was in the noise—
Nothing is spared, nought floats and nought survives.
Crushed by that dreadful wheel, the river strives ;
Tortured it falls, and to the distant sky
Casts a long fainting, agonizing cry ;—
When lo ! above that chaos of despairs,
Composed of all the gulf within it bears,
Torrential, hideous, hostile—there is seen
The rainbow, splendid with celestial sheen.
Vile plot ! base rock ! would the vext stream entomb !
You glory ! issue from this frightful gloom.

JEAN CHOUAN.

THE Whites fled, and the Blues fired down the glade.
A hill the plain commanded and surveyed,
And round this hill, of trees and verdure bare,
Wild forests closed th' horizon everywhere.
Safe hold and rampart were behind the mount:
There the Whites halt, and their small numbers count.
Jean Chouan rose, his long hair floating free—
"None can be dead, since here our chief we see,"
They cried. Jean Chouan listened to the shot:
"Are any missing?—No!—Then tarry not,
But fly!" Around him women, children stood,
In terror. "Sons! re-entering quick the wood,
Disperse yourselves!" As swallows scattering fly
On rapid wings, when storms invade the sky,
They fled to thickets drowned in mist and shade,
And ran—e'en brave men run when they're afraid.
Dread the disorder, when, in trembling flight,
Old men, and infants at the breast, unite,
Fearing or to be killed, or captive ta'en.
Jean Chouan, last, did with slow steps remain,
And often turned him back, and made a prayer.

Sudden, a cry within the glade you hear!
A woman mid a storm of bullets stood.
Already the whole band was in the wood—
Jean Chouan only stays. He turns, and sees
A woman burdened; pale and weak she flies—
Her naked feet, torn by the brambles, bleed;
She's all alone, and cries—"To help me speed!"
Jean Chouan mutters—"'Tis Jeanne Madeleine."
In line of shot, in middle of the plain,

On her the bullets with fierce fury pour.
Ah ! God Himself must bend the victim o'er,
And take her hand, and shelter 'neath His wing.
Death does such numerous darts around her fling,
She must be lost. "Help, help !" she loudly cries ;
But fugitives are deaf and fear denies—
The balls upon the helpless peasant ran.

Then on the hill which dominates the plain,
Jean Chouan bounded, manly, calm, and proud,
Dauntless. "I am Jean Chouan," called he loud.
The Blues cried, "'Tis the Chief!" and that brave form,
Engrossing all the thunder and the storm,
Made death his target change.—"Now take to flight,"
He shouts ; "save yourself, sister !" Mad with fright,
Jeanne sped into the wood, her life to save.
Like pine on snow, or mast upon the wave,
Jean Chouan (whom death seemed to fascinate)
Drew up. The Blues see only him. "I wait
What time your safety needs.—Go, daughter, go !
Joy 'mong your kindred you again shall know,
Again sweet blossoms in your bodice place."
And he alone it was who then did face
The storm of shot which fell on his great height,
Which seemed as if e'en then t'would win the fight.
The balls fell thick as hail. With scornful eye
He smiled, and raised his sword, when suddenly,
As a bear struck in cavern deep and wide,
He felt a ball pierce thro' and thro' his side.
He stood, and said, "'Tis well. Hail, Mary, Maid !"
Then, staggering towards the wood, he turned his head.— [he cried.
"Friends ! friends ! has Jeanne your shelter reached ?"
"She's safe !" the voices from the wood replied.

Jean Chouan murmured, "Good;" and dead he fell.

Peasants, O peasants! True, ye chose not well,
But still your memory has not lessened France.
Great were ye, in your fierce, dark ignorance—
Ye, whom your kings, wolves, priests, and savage wood
Made bandits of, were valiant knights and good.
Through all your frightful yoke and errors foul
You had mysterious flashes of the soul;
Bright rays at times from out your blindness flew.
Hail! I, the banished, am not hard on you—
Exile!—I know the cottage roof to spare.
We are proscribed—and you but phantoms are!
Brothers! we all have battled—but we sought
The future; you—benighted lions!—fought
To keep the past. We strove to climb the height;
You strove no less to sink in gulfs of night.
All warred, and martyrs were, by different course;
Without ambition and without remorse—
We to shut hell—you to keep wide the tomb.
Yet on your brows from high does radiance come:
Fraternal love and pity can unite
The sons of day with children of the night;
And hero, of the darkness! in this lay
For you I mourn—I, soldier of the day

THE CEMETERY OF EYLAU.

THIS to my elder Brothers, schoolboys gay,
Was told by Uncle Louis on a day;
He bid me play, with tender voice and bland,
Thinking me still too young to understand.
Howe'er, I listened, and his tale was this:—
"A battle? Bah!—and know you what it is?

A deal of smoke. You rise at dawn, and late
You go to bed. Here's one that I'll relate—
The battle is called Eylau. As I wot
I then was captain, and the Cross had got;
Yes I was captain—after all, in war
Man but a shadow is, and does not score.
But ne'er mind me; Eylau, you understand,
Is part of Prussia—water, wood, and land,
Ice, winter everywhere, and rain, and snow.

"Well, we were camped a ruined wall below,
And round the ancient belfry tombs appear.
Bénigssens' tactics were, first to come near,
Then fly. The Emperor such arts disdains,
And the snow whitened over all the plains.
Spy-glass in hand, Napoleon passed our way;
The guard declared, 'To-morrow is the day.'
Old men and women fled in troops confused
With children.—I looked on the graves and mused.
The night fires lit—the colonel bending o'er,
Cried, "Hugo!"—"Here!" "How many men?"—
"Six score."
"Well, your entire company take round, [ground."
And there get killed."—"Where?"—"In the burial
I answered.—"Apter place you could not find."
I had my flask; we drank; an icy wind
Blew. He said—"Captain, death is close at hand.
Life's pleasant—'tis a thing you understand;
But none dies better than your jolly blade—
I give my heart, but sell my skin," he said.
"Let's woman toast!—your post's the worst of all"
(Our colonel oft a merry jest let fall).
He adds, "The foe from ditch and wall keep back;
Stay, there, 'tis rather open to attack.
This graveyard of the battle is the key,

Keep it"—"We will"—"Some straw will handy be."
"We've none"—"Sleep on the ground.—Now tell me
this:
Your drummer, is he brave?"—"As Barra is!"—
"Good—Let him blindly, madly, sound the charge:
Noise must be great when numbers are not large.
D'ye hear! you little scamp, what you are bid?"
"Yes, Captain," said the grinning child, half hid
In snow and rime. The Colonel then went on—
"The battle will be fought with guns alone;
I, myself, like cold steel, and hate the way
In which the dastard shells are made to slay.
Valiant the sword—the shell's a traitor. Well,
The Emperor sees to that. Nought more to tell,
And so, good-bye. The post you will not leave,
Nor budge a foot, till six to-morrow eve."
The Colonel left.—I cried, "Right turn," and thence
We soon all entered in that narrow fence;
Grass walled around a church amid the sod,
In gloom, and o'er the graves, the Blessed God.

A sombre yard, with many a snowy plate—
Looked somewhat like the sea. We crenolate
The wall. I order all things, and decide
The ambulance shall 'neath the cross abide.
"We'll sup, then rest," I said. Snow lay about;
Our clothes mere rags.—'Tis very fine, no doubt,
But still unpleasant when the weather's bad.
I made my pillow of a grave, and had
My feet benumbed—my boots had lost their sole;
And captain soon and soldier, cheek by jowl,
No longer stirred, each sleeping o'er a corse.
So soldiers sleep; they neither know remorse,
Pity, or fear—not being in command—
And frozen by the snow, or burnt by sand,

They sleep.—Besides, fighting keen joy supplies.
I said, "Good night," and then I shut my eyes.
War has no time for pantomimes inept.
It snowed ; the sky was sullen, and we slept.
Some tools we found, and made a mighty flame ;
My drummer poked it up, and to me came,
To cast the reckoning as best he can.
Sons ! a great soldier was the little man !—
The crucifix looked like a gibbet vast ;
The snow still fell ; the fire died out at last.
For how long time it was we slumbered so,
I say, the devil take me if I know.
Soundly we slept. In sleep is death rehearsed :
'Tis good in war. I was right cold at first,
Then dreamt ; and fancied many a skeleton,
And spectre, that great epaulettes had on.
Slowly, though I upon my pillow lay,
I had a feeling as of coming day ;
My lids, though closed, a sense of radiance found.
Sudden ! through sleep, a deep and sullen sound
Roused me—'twas like a cannon's distant roar.
I woke, and something white was gathered o'er
My eyes. The snow, with soft and gentle fall,
During the silent night had wrapt us all
In shrouds. I start, and shake the snow away ;—
A bullet coming, whence I cannot say,
Awoke me quite. I bid it pass at large,
And cried, "Drummer, get up, and sound the charge!"

Then six score heads (as isles from ocean) all
Rose from the snow ; the sergeant sounds the call.
The dawn then rose, red and with joyance glad,
As 'twere a bloody mouth with smiling clad.
My thoughts ran to my mother, and the wind
Seemed whispering to me—"Oft in war we find

That with the rise of day death too doth rise."
I mused; at first around all quiet lies,
Those cannon shots only as signals were—
Before the ball, at times, some bars we hear,
Some prelude dancing with unmeaning strains.
The night had clogged the blood within our veins;
But coming battle made it hotly course.
The army 'gainst us came in all its force.
We held the key. A handful were my men,
On whom the shells, like woodman's axe, were then
About to rage. I wished myself elsewhere.
My men to skirmish, by the wall with care
I placed, who confidence and solace found
In hoped promotion, bought by grievous wound.
In war you confront death to clutch at fame,
My young Lieutenant, from St. Cyr, who came,
Said to me, "Morn, how sweet a thing I think,
How charming the Sun's rays. The snow is pink;
Captain, all laughs, and shines; how fresh the air;
How white the fields; how peaceful, pure, and fair."
I answered, "Soon 'twill all to horror change."
My thoughts were of the Rhine, the Alpine range,
The Adige, and our dreadful wars of yore.

The battle burst—six hundred throats and more,
Enormous, belching forth the fire that fills
Their mouths, together clamoured from the hills;
All the whole plain one smoking gulf was seen.
My drummer beat the charge with fury keen;
With cannons mixt the trumpets proudly sound,
And the shells rained upon our burial ground,
As if they wished to kill the very grave;
The rooks desert the tower their lives to save.
I recollect a shell burst in the earth,
And the corpse, startled, rose from out his berth,

As if man's racket woke him in the tomb.
Then the fog hid the sunshine. Ball and bomb
Produced a noise dread, inconceivable.
Berthier, Prince of the Empire, Vice-Constable,
Charged on our right a Hanoverian corps
With thirty squadrons. Then you saw no more,
Save thickest, darkest mist, starred o'er by shell,
So wholly had the strife and battle fell
Within that tragic mist been lost to view.
A cloud fallen on the earth spread round and grew
From smoke, which myriad cannons vomited.
Children! 'twas under this the armies bled.
Soft as the down floated the snow that night.
Good faith, we killed each other as we might:
We did our best. The dark and ruins through,
I saw my men like shadows come and go;
Ghosts, like espaliers, which on walls you range.
The field brought to me musings deep and strange:
Phantoms above, and the still dead below:
Some blazing cottages at distance glow.
The fog, through which was heard the mountain horn,
E'en thicker than before was toward us borne.
We now saw nothing but our burial ground;
We had the wall at mid-day for our bound;
As by a great black hand, so by the night
We were enclosed, and all things fade from sight.
Our church, some seagirt rock appeared to be.—
The bullets through the fog too closely see:
They keep us company, crushed the church roof
And chattered the stone cross, and gave us proof
That we were not alone on that dread plain.
We hungered, but no soup at hand—'tis vain
To look for food in such a place.—And worse,
The hail of balls fell with redoubled force.
Bullets are awkward—down they rain a-pelt,

Only what falls, and is unpleasant felt,
Are grains of flame, not sprinklings of a shower.
We were like men whose eyes are bandaged o'er—
All fell to pieces 'neath the shells; the trees,
The church, the tower, and I found decrease
The shadows which I saw around the place.
From time to time one fell.—"Death kills apace,"
A sergeant says,—like wolf ta'en in a net,
And as his sight the tombs snow-covered met,
"Why place us where already is complete,
The tale of guests"—Man's lot is like to wheat.
Thus to be mowed, and not the scythe to see,
Some shadows yet, in the gloom living be,
The scamp, my drummer, still his might employed,
We fired above the wall, now nigh destroyed.
Children! you have a garden—shot and ball
Rained on us, guardians of that fatal wall,
As you drench flowers with your water pot,
"Till six o'clock, you must not leave the spot."
This order all my thoughts were fixed upon.—
The lightnings flash 'mid feathers of the swan,
And 'mid the dark, the bullets flaming track
Were all my eyes could see—"Let us attack,"
The sergeant cried. "Whom? for I no one see."
"I hear their voice, their trumpet bray," said he,
"Let us rush forth, shot, shell, upon us rain,
Death spits upon us here." "Let us remain."
I add, "The battle's brunt by us is borne.
We hold the key"—"My patience well-nigh worn,"
The sergeant said. Black were the fields, the sky,
But though full night, the evening was not nigh.
"Till six o'clock," low to myself I said,
"By Jove, few better chances can be had
To advance," said my lieutenant; when a ball
Carried him off. I felt no hope at all

Of winning—Victory is an arrant jade ;
A pallid glare which through the fog was made,
Vaguely lit up the graveyard, but afar
Was naught distinct, save that we needed are
To concentrate upon our heads the bombs.
The emperor placed us there among the tombs,
Alone, riddled with shot, which we returned,
But what he did with us we ne'er discerned ;
We were the target midmost in that fight,
And to hold good, and battle on till night,
Till six o'clock to live the hours through.
Meanwhile to kill was what we had to do.
Fierce, powder-blackened, shot we, as we might,
And took but time our cartridges to bite ;
Without a word our soldiers fought and died—
"Sergeant ! d'ye see the foe retreat ?" I cried—
"No"—What then ?"—"Nought"—"Nor I"—"A
deluge ?"—"Yes,
Of fire." "See you our men ?"—"No, but I guess
From how the volleys sound, we're forty good"
Cried a brave grumbler, who beside me stood,
(He'd won his stripes)—"At most you'll thirty find."—
And all was snow and night ; the piercing wind
Blew, and while shivering, we the rain drops track,
A gulf of white spots 'gainst abyss of black—
Howe'er, the battle seemed becoming worse,
A kingdom perished 'neath an empire's force.
Behind the veil you guessed some dread event—
As lions upon mutual slaughter bent—
'Twas like the ancient giants' fabled war,
You heard discharges pealing near and far,
The crash of ruins—the outskirts of the town
Of Eylau set on fire and burning down.
The drums their dreadful music now surpass,
Six hundred cannon make the unceasing bass.

We killed each other, nothing yet was known
By France that hour her greatest stake was thrown.
Was the good God on high against or for?
How dark! I pulled my watch out o'er and o'er.
At times the silent field gave forth a cry,
Some fallen body writhed in agony;
Fast one by one shot down we met our doom,
Death-rattles filled the vast sepulchral gloom—
Kings have their soldiers as you have your toys.
I raised my sword, and shouting "Courage, boys!"
I waved it o'er my head. Strife now I wage,
Intoxicated, deaf, with so much rage;
Blow following blow by shot and shell were dealt.
Sudden, my arm, my right arm hung. I felt
My sword drop to my feet upon the sward;
My arm was broken. I picked up my sword
With the other hand; and, "Friends" (I gaily cried),
"To get this broken too is not denied."
Then I began to laugh—a useful whim—
For soldiers are not pleased to lose a limb,
And when their chief is wounded, rather glad.
How fled the time—one only hand I had,
That my sword needed, whatsoe'er betide;
The other, drenched in blood, hung by my side.
I could no longer get my watch. When, lo!
My drummer stopt. "Knave, are you frightened?'
"No;
I'm hungry," said the child. Just then the plain
Seemed rocked and shaken, and was filled amain
With such a cry as up to heaven rose.
I felt myself grow weak, the whole man goes
From out a wound. A broken arm; it drains;
To talk with some one when you're faint, sustains.
My Sergeant spoke to me. At hazard, "Yea,"
I cried; I did not want to faint away.

Sudden the noise left off; the night less black.
"Victory!" they shout. I shouted "Victory!" back;
And then some lights approaching us I see.
Bleeding, upon one hand and either knee
I crawled, and cried, "How do we stand?" and then
I added, "All rise up, and count, my men."
"Here!" said the Sergeant. "Here!" my scamp replied.
The Colonel, sword-in-hand, stood by my side.
"Tell me by whom the victory was gained?"
"By you," he said. The snow with blood was stained.
"Hugo! that's you; for 'tis your voice," said he.
"Yes." "And how many now are living?" "Three."

CHOICE BETWIXT TWO WAYFARERS.

DEATH I beheld and Shame I saw. The two
At evening went a lonely forest through.
Chill blew the blast, the trees unshapely showed,
And Death upon a dead horse ghastly rode,
And Shame upon a putrid steed rode by:
Of strange black birds you heard the dismal cry.

Said Shame, "In me you happiness behold.
I wend to joy. Come! Purple, silk, and gold,
Feasts, palaces, and priests and jollity;
Triumphant laughter; chambers vast and high;
Riches that bid you take whate'er you please;
Parks; starlit Edens full of stately trees;
Women who haste to meet you, beauty-browed;
Fame placing to his lips his trumpet loud;
Renown and glory sounding far and free;—
All this is yours if you will follow me."

"Your horse has an ill odour," I replied.

Death said, "My name is duty, and I ride
Towards the grave through toil and agony."

"And hast thou room behind thee," answered I.

Since then, toward darkness, where doth God appear
We ride together through the forest drear.

1851.

CIVIL WAR.

FURIOUS and dreadful was the crowd. They cried,
"To death!" round one who kept his calm, cold pride
Unmoved, and who himself seemed pitiless—
"Death to the wretch!" The crowd around him press.

To him it seemed a thing of course to die;
The game is lost, yours is the victory.
Well, let him die. Where the mob thickest meet,
They drag him from his home into the street.
"Death to the man!" a hundred voices cried;
His garments were with recent slaughter dyed.

This man was one of those who wage blind war
With kings against the people, nor compare
Brutus with Scœvola, Blanqui with Barbès;
He'd killed, no matter who, the livelong day.
Pity and fear alike to him unknown,
His hands by powder blackened freely shown.

A woman seized his coat. "Here on this spot
Kneel down! A soldier! He our comrades shot!"
"True," said the man. "Down with him!—shoot
him!—kill!"
The people shrieked. "Here—there—at the Bastile—
To th' Arsenal—come, march!" "Where you like
best,"
The captive said. All grim, with ranks close prest,
Loaded with guns. "Let the vile soldier die,
As though a wolf." The man said quietly—
"'Tis well, I am the wolf; but you're the hounds."
"He mocks us!" Death! from hundred voices sounds.
Clench fists assail the haughty captive now,
Whose lips o'erflow with gall, with gloom his brow.
Still "Death!" they shout; "we'll have no Emperor!"
You saw his eyes contempt and fury pour,
And calm he trampled, full of proud disdain,
O'er corpses which, perhaps, himself had slain.

Dread are the people when they wild are made;
He, 'neath their taunts, the higher holds his head.
They more than hold him, they invade, attack.

God! how they hate him!—how he hates them back!
How if the victor he had shot them all!
"Kill him! Just now he riddled us with ball!
Down with the traitor, the accurs'd, the spy,
Death to the brigand!"—
They hear suddenly
A little voice, which "'Tis my father" said;
The effect of unexpected light was made.
A child appeared, a child of six years old,
His arms held out in prayer, yet threatening bold.

All shouted "Let the spy be shot, be crushed:"
Then 'twixt the captive's knees the infant rushed,

And cried (his brow bright with baptismal ray)—
"Father! they shall not do you harm, I say."
The child from the same dwelling place came out.

"Down with him, death," increasing clamours shout;
"Down with him, of the murderer make an end."
Cannon and tocsin in the distance blend.
Now men of fearful mien fill all the street;
Crush Minister, Priest, King, beneath your feet;
Kill all, a lot of bandits, villains, spies.
"But since I tell you" (still the infant cries)
"That he's my father!—
"Pretty child," then said
One woman.—Soul his azure eyes displayed;
Pale, all in tears, he decent clothes had on.
Another said, "Your age, my little one?"
"Don't kill my father," did the child reply.

Then to the ground sunk many a thoughtful eye;
Their hands no more the man so hardly prest.

One more enraged, more ruthless than the rest,
Said to the child, "Begone!" "Where?" "Home!"
"What for?"
—"Your mother."—Said the father, "She's no more."
"Then he has none but you?" the man replied.
"What matters that?" and then himself applied
To warm the little hands that shivered so.
Then to his boy—"Dame Catherine, you know."
"Our neighbour?" "Yes; go to her." "You'll come too?"
"Yes, presently." "I won't go without you."
Why? "Lest they hurt you"—
And the father then

Whispered the chief of these infuriate men,
"Leave go my collar, gently lead the way,
I'll tell the child that I'm all safe to-day.
In the next street or elsewhere at your choice,
You then can shoot me." With a surly voice,
"Well!" said the chief, "and let the captive be."

The father then—"We walk as friends, you see,
These gentlemen and I." So after this
"Be good, go home." The child then sought a kiss,
And went away, quite happy, void of dread.

"And now we're undisturbed," the father said,
"Kill me where'er you please, elsewhere or here."

Then in that roar of battle you might hear,
A thrill, a murmur, from the crowd to come,
And all the people shouted
"Get you home."

LITTLE PAUL.

THE child was born, the mother died. Ah, why
This grievous oversight of destiny?
Why kill the mother, yet the child retain?
Why with a stepmother o'ercharge the pain?

The father, who was young, remarried—ah,
'Tis soon at one to be a Pariah.
This rosy babe did wrong to have been born—
A good old gaffer took the thing forlorn,
The grandsire. Sometimes, what scarce is, defends

What will be ; in his arms the child he tends,
Its mother now. Strange parts by love combined,
To cherish what the dead has left behind :—
One's old, and good for nought else, but to be
The good Samaritan to whom all flee
By instinct, all th' oppressed by wrong or grief,
And the small hands stretched out to find relief.
Needs must that some one should this duty ply,
Need is for some one good 'neath the black sky,
Lest pity from the human race should fade :
Some one to bring the child whose nurse is dead
The brown-eyed goat, who does the mountains rove ;
Some one to teach it to be loved, and love,
Who shall that dawning life cheer and protect,
Who shall be old, yet young, and claim respect.
And hence sometimes by God, the cradle's lord,
The mother, in the grandsire is restored.
He judges winter can alone impart
Such warmth ; and gives old age a woman's heart.

So little Paul was born, then orphan made
His large blue eyes soon filled with light and shade,
His baby speech to lisp began to try
Charming with childhood's frank simplicity ;
Angelic ere by manhood changed and spoiled.

The grandsire pale with years gazed on the child,
As you gaze on the sky slow gilded o'er.
Oh ! how that evening did that morn adore.
The grandsire to his house the orphan took,
Where on so wide a range of fields you look ;
Nought but a child can fill it ; all the plain
Is green, the meadows, forests, streams, contain
A thousand sweetest perfumes.—And their home
Had a large garden—and this flowerdom,

These meadows, perfumes, life, the child caress—
Flowers envy not.—They feel no bitterness.—
Within the garden peach and apple grow,
Your path you had to pick wildbriars through ;
Under the willows sparkling waters were,
You saw white patches like to shoulders fair,
As if the nymphs were bathing. Many a nest
Murmured the secret anthems of the blest.
All voices that you hear are sweet and low,
Springs, softly whispering, through the mosses flow ;
With all glad warbling, with all silent bliss,
The rustling of the foliage mingled is.
This Paradise of heaven and light the song !
The earth beneath repeats with stammering tongue.

In summer, when the sky was blue and glad,
Paul, nigh an angel, nigh an Eden had.
The child was loved by all this solitude :
Alas ! of love he gained the habitude.

A garden's full of beauty, is it not ?
Add an old man, an infant, to the spot ;
So God has done—to longing of the heart
Joining what to the sight may joy impart.

Paul was at first a puny child and weak.
Who knows if he will live ? A north-wind bleak
Blew at his birth ; perhaps the blast may come
To take the child to his dead mother home.

Paul must be fed ; a goat the office did,
And Paul is foster-brother to the kid.
Since a kid leaps, to walk a man behoves.
Paul fain would walk. The patriarch approves :
"'Tis true ; let's walk !" Children, their tottering
feet

Charybdis, Scylla, find in all they meet.
They stagger, their feet slip, their knees are bent,
But that no whit decreases their content.
Quivering does not to trees their bloom deny.
One's a proud age, and growth is victory.
Paul his first step has ta'en, then others took
(Mothers ! you see him if at yours you look).
The grandsire follows him—glad spectacle !
"That's right—now go along—mind not to fall."
Paul's brave ; he tries, stops, calls, then risking harms
He starts. The grandfather, with trembling arms,
Surrounds and guides him all his perils through,
And himself tottering makes him totter too.
Then the whole ended in a laughter peal.
As well try to paint stars, or to reveal
The sun-warmed dazzled forest, as pretend
The depths of childhood's laugh to comprehend :
'Tis love and sacred innocence in flower :
'Tis grace unheard of, and adventurous power ;
'Tis pride of purity, glad strength that grows ;
'Tis peace, 'tis ignorance that all things knows.
Laughter proves heaven is real, and makes God known.

The grandsire, like the saints in Bibles shown,
A seer whom Moses might his friend aver,
Was just a good old raptured grandfather.
Against the charm he knew nor sought defence,
But loved, sought, honoured, childhood's innocence :
He watched the day as in that brain it grew,
And every month Paul faltered something new.
Effort of thought to pierce the bars of speech,
Attempted flight of language forth to reach,
Which falls, recovers, gaily strives along,
And failing to be meaning, ends in song.

Paul mustered sounds together, gave them flight,
Scanning some wondrous strophe of delight:
He chattered, prattled, lisped, was never still,
And did the house with joy and laughter fill.
He sang, all smiled, peace reigned, and you would say
He signal gave for general holiday.
The trees talked of the child, in bower and wood,
And Paul was happy—Happiness how good!
With the authority that joy doth sway,
Paul reigned,—his grandfather his gentle prey,
Obeyed him as was fit. "Father, abide,"
He stopt:—"No; come,"—He came;—Spring's happy tide.
Has o'er old Winter all the rights of youth;
How glad a little home they had! Good sooth;
The despot child the grandsire must obey,
'Twas January bent on pleasing May!
How, 'mid the nests which poured their melodies,
Wandered in bliss these two simplicities;
This, two years old—and that, fourscore besets;
Once one of them remembers, one forgets,
'Twas the old man! In night they saw no scath,
The elder gave Paul thought, who gave him faith;
You'd say they had exchanged their souls, and each
To the other did some opposite virtue teach.
They mingled all—their games by day, by night
Their dreams: what love did these good souls unite!
They've but one room, they never separate
As the first step: so the first alphabet.
What heavenly means for interchange of mind!
No tone the grandsire soft enough could find,
In which to make his Cherub scholar spell,
And say, "Dear little Paul, I love so well."
Delightful dialogues their hours fill,
Such as the blue birds in the story trill:—

"Take care! That water near; now Paul, you've been
And wet your little feet." "I did not mean."
"Mind the stones." "Yes, Grandfather." "Go and
play."
The sky was pure, and fine and calm the day,
The sun shone brightly with triumphant glow—
—The while the old man kissed the orphan's brow,
The father lived with his new wife at home.
In vain the dead appeal from out the tomb,
When a new soul does the old place enjoy.
And by his second wife he had a boy;
Paul knew it not—What then?—The happy elf,
Gay, quiet, safe, content, had to himself
His grandfather——
And, the grandfather died.

To his loved Ruth, when ancient Boaz cried,
"Weep for me, I depart," then Ruth could weep.
But children know not, their eyes wandering keep;
They muse.—At times when faint the grandsire said:
"My Paul, I soon, alas! shall soon be dead,
Your poor old grandfather you'll see no more,
Who loved you so."—Glad ignorance cloaks o'er
The truth, and the child full of rays and cheer,
Laughed on.
A rustic church, the village near,
Poor as the roofs the belfry doth protect
Opened, I joined the crowd, I recollect
The priest (low muttering some vague orison),
Friends and relations to the house sped on,
The kind old sire to bury in the earth.
Round this dark doom, the plain was full of mirth,
That flowers such convoys liked you would have said
The good old folk mingling their voices prayed.
Our path was through a deep and hollow way,

A quiet cow upon the roadside lay,
And on the rustic mourners (who were clad
In summer garb) gazed motherly and sad.

The little one followed the humble bier.—
The elder to the graveyard nearest there
They bore—a waste enclosed by crumbling wall,
Hard by the church, rough, bare ; no cypress tall,
No lofty tomb, with lying praise, was there,
But a plain field where graves and crosses were.
Grim spot ! where sleep the dead, if God permit,
With wooden bars at night to fasten it.
Across the gate a mass of ivy grew.
The little child (a matter strange to view)
Of the approach close observation took.

Fate does to children like a vision look,
And life appears a dream before their eyes.
Alas ! night dims the star about to rise.
Paul was but three !

"Go, Satan, brat, I say !
Bad child, your sight enrages me ! Away !—
Be off ! I'll beat you, little wretch abhorred !
I'm but too good to bear him at my board.
He stained my gown ; he drank the milk. Till night,
Dry bread—the cellar ! And he's such a fright !"
To whom all this ?—To Paul, sweet child forlorn.
Soon as his grandsire to the grave was borne,
Paul saw him by an unknown man replaced—
His father. Then a woman, with bare breast,
Suckling a child—his brother.

At first sight
The woman hates him with envenomed spite.

A mother !—'Tis a sphinx, heart soft, and flint,
Black, white, jealous, and loving without stint,
Kind to her own, to other's child severe.

To suffer, knowing why, for saint or seer,
'Tis well ; but for a child to be debarred
All love, and live proscribed, is hard—is hard.
And now the thorn, where stood the oak of late—
How great the change, from love to bitter hate !
Paul understood it not. When he came back
At eve, his room seemed something chill and black.
Long time he wept ; and yet for no one wept.
Like a wan reed, a shivering o'er him crept :
Wakening, perplext, amazed, he saw the morn.
Ah, these poor little ones ! why are they born ?
The house seemed dayless, windowless to view ;
The dawn no longer was the friend he knew.
If he came near, " Get off !—begone, I say,"
The mother cried. Paul slowly slunk away.
In darkest shade, dazed, drowned in black annoy,
The child, who made all glad, now lost all joy.
His grief cast sadness e'en o'er bird and flower.
Late playful sprite !—now butt of savage power.
" I loathe the dirty brat ; he creeps defiled."
She took his toys, and gave them to her child.
The father, base through love, permitted all.
From angel to a leper ! What a fall !
His wife, when she sees Paul, cries, " May he die !"
Her curses sped.—
She does caresses ply,
But not on him.—" Come thou, my love, my soul !
Lord ! I the loveliest of thine angels stole ;
To make his frock, a bit of heaven I've ta'en.
A child !—He still an angel does remain.
I hold God's heaven in my arms : you see.

You beauty boy, I love you ; you will be
A man. He's a good weight—as heavy is
As a boy old enough to walk. I kiss
Your feet. From you comes all my light, my sky !"
And Paul remembered, with such memory
As lambs may have, or roses—vague and dim—
That once such words had been applied to him.
His meals upon the ground, in some lone spot,
He took ; was silent now, and prattled not,
Nor cried. Children strong in endurance grow
Sometimes.
Oft towards the door his looks would go.
One evening, through the dwelling far and near
They sought, but found him not. 'Twas winter drear,
Which hates you. Treacherous is the dark bleak night ;
The snow hides little footsteps from the sight.
Upon the morrow morn the child they found ;—
Then some of distant cries recalled the sound ;
Nay, one had laughed, thinking that in the air,
Through the dark shades, which oft strange noises bear,
A voice, which seemed, "Papa ! Papa !" to say.
The tale filled the whole village with dismay.
They searched ; the child was in that graveyard lone,
Calm as the night, and pallid as the stone—
Stretched at the gate, and cold. How could he trace,
In such a night, to such a dismal place
His way ?—in the lone plain, where no lights are ?
One little hand still clutched the frozen bar :
You saw, he'd tried to open it. He thought
Some one was there from whom might help be sought.
Long had he called, in that still, silent shade ;
And then upon the ground had fallen dead.
His grandfather, his kind old friend, hard by—
Him could he not awake—so slept a-nigh.

THE VANISHED CITY.

WATER is never idle. Thousand years,
Ere Adam was, that spectre with white hairs,
Our ancestor—so your descent you trace—
When giants still mixed with the human race—
In times whereof Tradition speaketh not,
A brick-built city stood upon the spot
Where now the north wind stirs the ocean foam.
That city was of mad excess the home:
Pale lightnings did at times its riot threat;
What now is sea was a wide plain as yet;
Ships voyage now where chariots rolled before,
And hurricanes replace the Kings of yore.
For, to make deserts, God, who rules mankind,
Begins with kings, and ends the work by wind.
This folk, this ant-hill, rumour, gossip, noise,
This troop of souls, by sorrow moved, and joys,
Sounded as in a tempest hums a swarm—
The neighbouring ocean caused them no alarm.

This city had its Kings; Kings proud and great,
Who heads had 'neath them, as the reapers wheat.
Were they bad?—No!—But they were Kings. And Kings
Are men o'er-high, whom a vague terror wrings.
In wrong they pleasure seek, and fears allay,
And are, 'mid beasts of burden, beasts of prey.
"'Tis not their fault!" the Sage, with pity, cries,
"They would be better if born otherwise."
Men still are men. The despot's wickedness
Comes of ill teaching, and of power's excess—
Comes of the purple he from childhood wears:
Slaves would be tyrants if the chance were theirs.

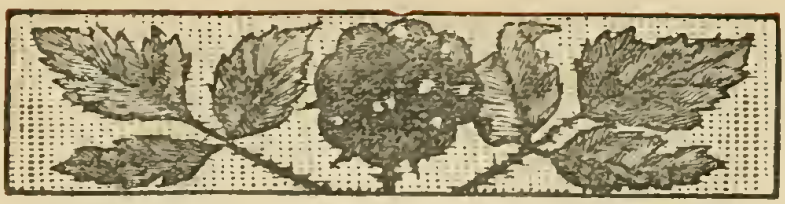
This ancient city then was built of brick,
With ships, bazaars, and lofty towers thick ;
Arches, and palaces for music famed,
And brazen monsters which their Gods they named.
Cruel, and gay, this town whose squares and streets,
Showed gibbets which the crowd with laughter greets ;
Hymns of forgetfulness they sing, for man
Is but a breath, and only lasts a span—
The avenues by sparkling lakes were closed ;
The King's wives bathed, their naked charms exposed
In parks where peacocks all their stars display.
Hammers that drive the sleeper's rest away,
Pounded on anvils black, from dawn to night,
And vultures preened their feathers, and alight,
Upon the Temples, by no fears deterred,
For savage idols love the cruel bird ;
Tigers with Hydras suit—the eagles know
That they no ancient customs overthrow
If, when blood flows from th' altar to the sod,
They come, and share the slaughter with the god.
Pure gold the altar of that Fane august ;
The cedar roof was clenched, for fear of rust,
With wooden pegs for nails, and night and day
Did Hautbois, Clarions, Cymbals loudly play
For fear their savage god should fall asleep ;
Such life, such deeds that mighty city steep,
There women flock for riot vile, and pelf.

One day the ocean 'gan to stir itself
Gently, devoid of rage, beside the town :
It silently gnawed through the rocks, and down
Without noise, shock, or the least movement rough,
Like a grave workman who has time enough.
In vain a man his ear fixed to the ground
Had closely listened ; he had heard no sound ;

The water dumbly, softly wears, destroys ;
Over deep silence, raves the city's noise,
So that at eve, at Nature's shuddering hour,
When (like an Emir of tyrannic power)
Sirius appears, and on the horizon black,
Bids countless stars pursue their mighty track,
The clouds the only birds that never sleep,
Collected by the winds through heaven's steep—
The moon, the stars, the white-cap't hills descry
Houses, domes, pillars, arches, suddenly
With the whole city, people, army all,
Their King who sang and feasted in his hall,
And had not time to rise up from the board—
Sink into nameless depth of darkness poured,
And whilst at once, heaped up from top to base,
Towers, palaces are gulfed without a trace,
A hoarse, a savage murmuring arose,
And you behold like a vast mouth unclose,
A hole, whence spouts a stream of foaming wrath,
Gulf where the town falls in, the sea comes forth.

And then all vanished !—waves roll o'er the plain.—
—Now you see nothing but the deep, wide main,
Stirred by the winds, alone beneath the skies.——

Such is the shock of ocean's mysteries !



From SONGS OF THE STREETS AND WOODS.

1865.

[These few words are prefixed by the author to the *Chansons des Rues et des Bois*:—"It is a sad and serious lesson which is given by the confrontation of two ages in the same man. The age which begins, and the age which finishes,—the hope of the former is in life, of the latter, in death. It is not without use to compare the starting-point with the goal, the fresh stir of the morning with the calm of evening, the illusion with the result. The heart of man has a blank page at the beginning, on which is written, 'Youth,' and another at the end, on which is written, 'Wisdom.' It is these two pages which will be found in this book. In this book reality is modified by all that exists in man beyond the real. This book was composed chiefly by dreamings, but a little by recollection. Dreaming is allowed to the vanquished, and recollection to the lonely.]

TO JEANNE.

THIS spot, so pure, you make complete;
This wood, far from each trodden way,
Seems to have formed its flowers sweet,
Of all the virtues you display.

In dawn your tender age is seen,
  Jeanne, there exists beneath the sky
Fair landscapes, and good hearts between
  A certain sweet affinity.

This valley is with mirth arrayed,
  For you its homage to express;
It is a glory for your head,
  An Eden for your happiness.

All creatures that approach you long
  To catch your eye, to fix your sight,
Well knowing that your laugh, your song,
  Your brow, are all sincere and right.

O Jeanne! your sweetness is so clear,
  That when you rove this forest blest,
The little birds, devoid of fear,
  Peep forth from out their leafy nest.

FOR JEANNE ALONE.

I CARE nothing, well I ween,
  For the belfry or the bell,
I know nothing of the queen,
  Of the king can nothing tell.

I my ignorance confess,
  Whether proud the lord or meek;
If the curate says the mass
  Or in Latin or in Greek.

If 'tis best to dance or cry,
  What birds chatter in the grove ;
But of one thing sure am I,
  That with all my heart I love.

Know you, Jeanne, of what I dream ?
  'Tis the movement of your feet ;
When you trip across the stream,
  Like a bird so light and fleet.

Know you wherefore I complain ?
  'Tis that Jeanne, across the moor
An unseen, compelling chain,
  Ever draws me to your door.

Know you, Jeanne, what hard I take ?
  'Tis the charm, the conquering art,
With which, either gloom you make,
  Or else sunshine in my heart.

Knowst what thoughts my head possess ?
  'Tis that I more dearly prize
The least flower upon your dress,
  Than all the stars that deck the skies.

EXTRACT FROM "FALLING STARS."

LOVERS twain beneath the night,
  Dream a young and happy pair ;
Through the sky-space infinite,
  Suns are seeded everywhere,

Athwart th' heav'n's loud-sounding dome,
  While from night's extremest way
Showers of sparkling dawn-dust roam
  Stars that pass and fade away.

Heaps of falling stars are shed
  Through the vast dark zenith high ;
Kindled ash, which censers spread,
  Incense of infinity.

And beneath, which dews bedew,
  Showing pinks and violets shy ;
Yellow primrose, pansy blue,
  Lilies, glory of July.

By the cool mist, nearly drowned,
  Lies the meadow far away,
Girded by the forest round,
  Shivering, so that one would say,

That the earth, 'neath veil of showers,
  Which the tear-wet forest sheds
Wide its apron, decked with flowers,
  To receive the stars outspreads.

TO ROSITA.

SO, you won't love, you naughty thing,
  And all the spring is dismal made ;
Hear you not how the bird doth sing
  In the deep forest's pleasant shade.

If love be missing, Eden dies ;
  For beauty springs from love alone.

Blue when the sun doth shine, the skies
Are blackened o'er if he be gone.

Faded and lost your charms will prove
If you such foolishness prolong;
The bird sings that we ought to love,
And he can sing no other song.

BY SILENCE SHE THE BATTLE WON.

BY silence she the battle won,
Thence did my passion for her spring
My heart at first, perceived alone,
A scarce felt fluttering of the wing.

Together in the wood we drove,
Each eve, far distant from the throng;
I talked, and other voices strove,
Filling the forest with their song.

Her eyes were full of mystery,
Her dove-like wondrous eyes, which have
The depth unfathomed of the sky,
The dawn, as of the silent grave.

Still not a word did she bestow,
Silent and pensive, on we roll—
When, all at once, I felt the blow,
And a winged arrow pierced my soul.

Ah! what is love?—no wisdom tells—
The silent maid, who only smiles;
The cavern is, where hidden dwells
The little archer full of wiles.

ROSA ANGRY.

DISPUTING! whence the quarrel bred?
Because both are with love consumed,
'Dearest" and "Dear" have scarce been said,
When "Miss" and "Sir" are quick resumed.

Against its nest the heart oft strains,
The blue sky, clouds, the soul is riven;
Love is a sky which often rains,
And floods on lovers' heads are driven.

And oft, when void of fear and doubt,
In forests which doth June adorn,
Trusting the faith, we roam about
Of promise given by the morn,

'Ere evening close we may be caught,
For finest days may cheat us still,
By some great cloud with blackness fraught,
Which was not written in the bill.

THE LION'S MID-DAY REST.

THE Lion rests his cave beneath,
Stilled in that silent mighty sleep
Of mid-day, when the Sun's hot breath
Like a dull weight, the air doth steep.

The deserts listening far and near
Now breathe; their lord no more astir,
For the lone tracts are filled with fear
Of that enormous wanderer.

His breathings lift his tawny side,
Mist o'er his dreadful eyeballs shed ;
He sleeps before the cavern wide,
His formidable length outspread.

Peace rests on his vast visage now,
And e'en through sleep—forgetfulness—
As of a sage his haughty brow,
He doth strength's quiet might possess.

Noon has the cistern's waters dried ;
No sounds his heavy sleep restrain ;
His jaws are as a cavern wide,
And like a wood his yellow mane.

To prowl the craggy heights he seems
Of Ossa and of Pelion ;
Wrapt in those fierce, enormous dreams,
Which lion brains may ponder on.

The plain lies hushed in silent awe,
Where late his footsteps wont to stray ;
But if he moved his dreadful paw,
What swarms of flies would speed away.

TO A FRIEND.

ON the dread cliffs which storms infest,
Walls which the waves dash in between
A gloomy rock, there blooms at rest
A charming meadow, small and green.

Since, friend, you lend me, where I dwell,
Your house, remote from human-kind,

'Twixt the two joys I love so well,
The giant waves, the mighty wind

All thanks and hail! If fortune frowns
Or smiles, perchance this age of ours
Is like the seaweed 'neath the downs,
Directed by abyssmal powers.

Our souls are like the drifted clouds—
Winds, fair or foul, direct their flight;
Hurried in disconnected crowds,
They travel towards the Infinite.

This human turmoil, vast and vain
Of which our reason is the star,
Takes, leaves, deserts—brings back again
Within the horizon, Hope afar!

This sea, tumultuous, fierce, and vast,
Which trembles sore, and wounds the age,
Foams, threatens, and at times will cast
My name amid its cries of rage.

Hatreds about me cling and swarm,
My thought—this noise would vainly fright—
Is like the bird who braves the storm,
Amid the birds that haunt the night.

And while your fields I cultivate,
Just as you wish, with loving care,
The press, with much invective hate,
Gnashes, and tugs me by the hair.

Their diatribes are fierce and sharp:
I'm ass, and rogue, and this and that;
Now I am Pradon for La Harpe,
Then for de Maistre, I seem Marat!

What matters !—hearts are drunk, but man,
  Sobered, in times to come will still
Do with my books whate'er they can,
  And do with me—whate'er they will.

But I, for joy and wonder see,
  In Honfleur meads, your bounty lends,
How burdened by the yellow bee,
  The lavender's sweet blossom bends.

DURING AN ILLNESS.

THEY tell me I am very ill :
  Friend, see my eyes look dead and wan ;
The sinister embrace I feel
  Of the eternal skeleton.

I rise, but seek again my berth ;
  For rest, I feel as if I had
Already in my throat the earth,
  And scent of grave-yard, foul and bad.

Like sail that to the port would 'scape,
  I shiver, and my steps are slow ;
And icy cold—a corpse-like shape,
  Ghastly, is seen my sheet below.

The power to warm my hands is past ;
  Like snow my flesh dissolves away ;
Upon my brow I feel the blast
  Of what dread thing, I cannot say.

Is it the wind from shades obscure—
  That wind which pass'd o'er Jesus' soul ?
Is't the great Nought of Epicure ?
  Or is't Spinosa's mighty whole ?

The doctor goes—no hope he brings ;
  Low whisper whosoe'er is near ;
All sinks and sways, e'en lifeless things
  Assume an attitude of fear.

"He's lost !" I hear them murmur nigh.
  My body vacillates ; I feel
The helpless, broken armoury
  Of mind and senses fail and reel.

That moment—infinite, supreme—
  From out the darkness meets my eye,
A pale, vague sun, as in a dream,
  Through the wan heavens seems to rise.

That moment, whether false or true,
  Now raises its mysterious front ;
Think not I tremble at the view—
  To watch such secrets is my wont.

My soul transformed, as sight dilates,
  My reason seeks the Godhead veiled ;
At last I touch the eternal gates,
  And night is by my keys assailed.

To God, the sexton digs our way :
  To die is but to learn aright.
"Old labourer !" to Death I say,
  "I come to see the hidden sight."

From THE TERRIBLE YEAR.

[The seventeenth edition of the *Année Terrible* is dated April 1872, when hardly two years had passed from the beginning of the disasters which it records. At this date peace and order had been restored to Paris, but the poet in his short preface notes that the state of siege still continued, and concludes with saying, "The present state of things will pass away. The Republic we possess, and we shall have Liberty."]

THE TERRIBLE YEAR.

THAT dreadful year I gird me to relate,
And now bent o'er my desk I hesitate.
Shall I go further on, or shall I stay?
O, France! O, grief! to see a star decay;
I feel the blush of rueful shame arise;
Plagues heaped on plagues, and woes on agonies.
Still must I on for truth and history;
The Age stands at the Bar! The witness—I.

SEDAN.

TOULON was nought—Sedan is more!—The wretch
O'er whom does logic doom, its trammels stretch,
Slave of his crimes—given up with baudaged eyes,

To the black haps, which played with him at dice,
Dreamer—is whelmed in endless infamy;
The far off formidable gaze on high,
Which ne'er looks off from crime, marked all his way;
God pushed the tyrant—worm and ghost to-day—
Into a gloom that history shudders o'er,
And which for none He opened up before:
There, in the gulf's worst chasm, was he cast,
The Judge all that was prophesied, surpassed.

That man once chanced to dream—I reign, 'tis true!
But men despise me.—They must fear me too;
I, in my turn, will rule the world; I'm quite
My uncle's equal. Terror is my right.
No Austerlitz, yet my Brumaire I have,
For him both Machiavel and Homer slave;
And both kept busy with the task he set.
I want but Machiavel—I've Galifet;
Morny was mine, Rouher, Devienne, remain.
Madrid, Vienna, Lisbon, though unta'en—
Yet Dresden, Munich, Naples I shall take;
St. Andrew's cross from off the ocean rake,
And that old Albion to subjection bring.
A robber's nought, unless a conquering King!
I will be great—a pirate—slaves will own;
Mitred Mastai,—Abdul on his throne,—
The Czar, in bear-skin robe and ermined crown.
Since I with shells Montmartre have battered down,
I can take Prussia—'Tis as sharp to win
By siege Tortoni, as besiege Berlin,
Who took a bank, may also take Mayence,
Stamboul and Petersburg are mere pretence.
Pius—Emmanuel—both at daggers drawn,
Like two he-goats, fierce fighting on a lawn;
England and Ireland at each other rail,

And Spain on Cuba pours an iron hail.
Joseph and William at each other's hair,
Mock Attila, sham Cæsar, fiercely tear,
And I, once down-at-heel and tippler known,
Shall be the arbiter of every throne—
This glory, I shall reach without a blow,
To be supreme—the mightiest here below—
From false Napoleon seem the true Charlemagne.
'Tis fine !—How do the trick ? ask banker Magne
To advance Leboeuf some money, then look out,
(Thus Haroun and his vizier stole about)
When all men sleep and streets deserted lie,
And quickly try the chance, and surely I
May cross the Rhine, who crossed the Rubicon.
Garlands and flowers shall Piétri throw me down,
Magnan is dead, but Frossard I retain ;
St Arnaud's missing, still I have Bazaine ;
That Bismarck's but a mountebank, is plain,
I think I play a part as well as he,
Up to this time, chance has complied with me,
Has been my 'complice. Fraud for wife I have ;
Coward ! I've conquered—Shone, although a knave,
Forward ! I've Paris, therefore all mankind,
All things smile on me, why then lag behind ?
I want but doublets, and my fortune's made.
Let me go on, since Fortune is a jade
The world is mine, I chose to govern all,
'Neath juggler's cup I hold the starry ball ;
I cheated France—now let us Europe cheat,
My cloak, December ! Night—my hiding sheet ;
Eagles are gone, I've nought but buzzards now.
'Tis night ; I'll use it, and try anyhow.

Full day, on Rome, Vienna, London lies,
And, save that man, all opened wide their eyes ;

Berlin watched silent, smiling with delight,
As he was blind he fancied it was night—
All saw the light, he only saw the shade.

Alas, no count of time, place, number made,
Groping unhelped, trusting to destiny ;
And having darkness for his sole ally.
This suicide, France's proud armies took,
Which honour never yet nor fame forsook.

And without arms, bread, chiefs, or general,
To the gulf's lowest depth conducted all,
Tranquil the whole into the trap he led.
Where go you ? cried the tomb—
Who knows ?—he said.

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Agincourt smiles, henceforward Ramilies—
Trafalgar—shall our hours of sorrow please.
Poitiers no grief, Blenheim is no disgrace.
Crecy no field which makes us veil our face.
Black Rosbach almost seems a victory.
This ! France, thy hideous spot in history—
Sedan ! Death-name, which all has darkened o'er,
Spit forth ! so never to pronounce it more.

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Fierce was the strife ! The carnage large and dire,
Gave to the combatants a glance of fire.
Shrieking the Furies fell, at distance stood,
In a dark cloud all spattered o'er with blood,
Mitrailleuses, mortars, cannons belch their war ;
Ravens, those busy workers, come from far.

Banquets are slaughter, massacre a feast ;
Rage filled the gloom, and spread from breast to breast ;
All Nature part in the fierce battle takes ;
From man who maddens, to the tree that shakes ;
The fatal field itself seemed frenzied o'er ;
One is repulsed, one driven on before.
Now France, now Germany successful cope ;
All either had of death the tragic hope,
Or hideous joy of killing—no man shrunk ;
All with the acrid scent of blood were drunk ;
None yield ; each this the fatal hour knows,
That seed an arm of fearful power sows ;
Bullets rained down upon the darkened sod ;
The wounded groaned, the nearest on them trod ;
The hoarse-mouthed cannon on the *melée* blew
A vast thick smoke, which on the breezes flew.
Country, devotion, fame, their thoughts engage,
And duty's call, beneath their desperate rage,
Sudden—in all this mist, 'mid thunder's breath,
In the vast gloom where laughs imagined death ;
In clash of epic shocks, and in the hell
Of brass and copper which on iron fell ;
The crash, the crush of hurtling shell and bomb,
In rain and rave of that wild hecatomb ;
While the harsh clarions sound their dismal cry,
The while our soldiers strive and proudly try
To mate the deeds of their great ancestors,
A shudder through the haggard standards pours,
While waiting the decree of destiny.—
All bleed, fight bravely, strive, or nobly die,—
They heard the monstrous words—"I wish to live!"

The cannons are struck dumb—no longer strive
The blood-drunk hosts—the abysmal word was said—

And the black eagle waits with claws outspread.

PARIS SLANDERED.

THE gloomy night, to hate the dawn is wont:
Th' Athenian seems to Vandal an affront.
Paris, while they attack, they think it best
To make their ambush look like an arrest.
Pedant helps soldier; both together vie
To asperse th' heroic city. Calumny,
Mingled with shells, in the bombardment rains
The soldier kills, and lies the pleader feigns.
Your morals, your religion they accuse,
And insults heap their murder to excuse.
They slander that they may assassinate.
City and People, as a Senate great,
Fight, draw the sword, O city of the light,
Which fosters art, defends the cotter's right.
Let, O proud home of man's equality,
Howl round thee the foul hordes of bigotry—
Black props of throne and altar—Hypocrites!
Who, in all ages, have proscribed the lights;
Who guard all Gods against th' inquiring mind;
Whose screech in every history we find—
At Thebes, Mycenæ, Delphi, Memphis, Rome—
Like bark of unclean dogs from distance come.

THE SICK CHILD.

IF still your little face this pallor has,
In our close air defiled;
If you within my fatal shadow pass—
I, aged—you, a child.

If of our days, I, tangled, see the chain—
I who, on bended knee,

Watch you ; and long that I by death was ta'en,
And you from danger free.

If still your thin frail hands let through the day,
If in your cot you lie
Shivering ;—you seem like a small bird to stay
For wings, that you may fly.

Root on our earth to take, if you appear
But for a little space—
If, Jeanne, your eyes go wandering here and there
In our mysterious place.

If you are rosy, gay, and strong no more ;
If, musing, you are sad ;
If after you, you do not shut the door,
By which you entrance had.

If, as a lovely girl, I may not see
That well and bright you grow,
And glad ; but seem a little spirit to be,
Which is in haste to go—

I deem that here, where swaddling clothes and shroud
Oft close together lie,
You came to flit : and angel art allowed
Away with me to fly.

CAPITULATION.

THUS greatest nations to their fall descend—
'Tis in miscarriage all their labours end ;
Was it for this, th' indignant people say,
We did all night on the high bastions stay ?

Were we for this unconquered, lofty, stark,
And of the Prussian missiles stood the mark?
Was it for this, we heroes, martyrs were,
And more and fiercer war than Tyre bare;
Than Corinth or Byzantium more endured,
For this, for five long months, have been immured
By those black furtive Teutons, in whose eyes
The gloomy stupor of weird forests lies!
For this dug mines, and borne the strife immense,
Broke bridges, famine braved, and pestilence;
Did treuches make, fix piles, and towers build!
O France! and with the seed of slaughter filled
The grave—of battles the black granary!
For this did storm and shot each day defy!

High Heavens! after such tests, such noble deeds
By Paris wrought which uncomplaining bleeds,—
After vast hopes, and expectations high
Of the proud town panting for victory;
Which dashing gainst the cannon iron knit,
Appeared its walls to champ, as horse its bit.—
Where valour greater grew, new woes to meet,
Where children shelled while running in the street,
Picked up the shells, and cannon balls in sport,—
When not one single citizen fell short;—
Three hundred thousand for the battle steeled—
—Their officers th' unconquered city yield!
With your devotion, fury, pride of heart,
And courage,—they have played the coward's part,
People!—And history shall loathe and blame
Such glory, tarnished by so deep a shame.

BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY.

IF this foul war we ended see,
And grant all Prussia longs to get,
Then, like a glass our France would be,
Upon a pothouse table set:—

You empty it, and then you break!
Our haughty country is no more.
O grief, that shame should overtake
Where only honour lived of yore!

Black morrow, with dismay for text;
All dregs we drink—on ashes feed;
The eagles gone; there follow next
The vultures, these do hawks succeed.

Two provinces now torn away—
Metz poisoned, Strasburg crucified;
Sedan, deserter in the fray,
A brand on France that will abide.

There lives in souls degenerate
Base love of loathly happiness—
Pride cast away; they cultivate
The growth, the increase of disgrace.

Our ancient splendour stained, belied,
Our mighty wars dishonoured now,
The country mazed and stupified,
Unused to live with lowered brow.

The foeman in our citadels;
Attila's shadow o'er us thrown;
The swallow to its fellow tells,
This is not France that we have known.

Her mouth full of the foul Bazaine !
  Renown, with slow and broken wing,
Does with unwholesome slaver stain
  The trump that erst did nobly ring.

Brethren alone they dare to fight.
  Bayard ! thy name no longer lives ;
They murder now, to hide from sight
  That lately they were fugitives.

Black night mounts up on every brow,
  And not a soul dares soar on high ;
Heaven does itself our shame avow,
  Since we refuse to seek the sky.

Chill hearts are here, and darkness deep—
  People from people separate
All wide apart and hostile keep,
  And love is dead, and turned to hate.

Prussia and France are foemen sworn ;
  That host is all with hatred fired ;
Our dark eclipse their joyful morn—
  Our tomb, by all of them desired.

Shipwreck ! To mighty deeds good bye !
  Deceived, deceiving all is made ;
"The cowards !" to our flag they cry—
  And to our cannon, "They're afraid."

Our pride, our hopes, departed all,
  A shroud on history fallen is—
O God ! permit not France to fall
  In gulf of such a peace as this.

THE STRUGGLE.

'TIS angry ignorance, to pity those
Who still their eyes to truth's bright radiance close ;
And, friend, why care? Honour with us we see.
Pity those rulers, who on bended knee
Sign the vile peace which France doth gripe and rend ;
Let their insane ingratitude descend,
In history with your contempt and mine.
Jesus himself their malice would malign ;
Paul a fierce democrat they would have named ;
And Socrates as a mere quack defamed.
They're made so their blear eyes the daylight fear—
The fault not theirs, at Naples, Rome, or here,
Throughout—'tis natural these souls perverse
As soldiers envy you—as priests should curse ;
The first being beaten—and unmasked the last.
The ice which by our quays this winter passed
Pell mell, and all things cold and gloomy made,
Yet drifting quickly melted in the shade,
Was not more hateful, nor more vain than this.
You who of old (as heaven-sent warriors may)
Freed cities without armies and alone,
Let their vile clamours at your head be thrown.
What matters it !—clasp we our hands anew,
I, the old Frenchman—the old Roman you.
Let us go hence this place, unmeet and vain,
And let us each our lofty cliffs regain,
Where, if we're hissed—at least 'tis by the sea :
Come, let the lightning our insulter be—
Fury not base—grief worthy of the brave—
True gulfs—and quit their slaver for the wave.

IN THE CIRCUS.

THE southern Lion saw the Polar Bear
Rush at him, gnash, and, full of fiery glare
Attack him, growling worse than Nubian wind.
The Lion said—"You idiot, never mind;
We're in the circus, and you fight with me—
What for? That low-browed fellow do you see?
That's Nero—Roman Emperor, so it haps;—
You fight for him; bleed, and he laughs and claps.
Brother, in the wide world we ne'er were foes,
And heaven alike o'er each its mantle throws.
You see above no fewer stars than I.
With us, what wants that master set on high?
He's pleased! but we?—we by his order fight:
His business is to laugh, and ours to bite.
He makes us kill each other; while, good sooth,
Brother, my claw gives answer to your tooth,
He's there upon his throne, with gaze intent,
Our pangs his sport! Our spheres are different.
Brother, when we our life-blood shed in streams,
To him, in purple clad, it harmless seems.
Come, dolt, set on! my claws prepared you see:
But still I think and say, we fools shall be
In internecine strife to spend our power,
And wiser 'twere the Emperor to devour!

TO THOSE WHO TALK ABOUT FRATERNITY.

WHEN we are conquerors we'll see—till then
The feeling fitting grief is fierce disdain:
Best suits defeat the gloomy downcast eye,
Free, we spread light; enslaved, we prophesy.

We're burked, and 'twixt us twain no love can dwell !
The ruin of the invader I foretell.
'Tis proper pride, in those who feel the chain,
Hatred alone for shelter to retain ;
To love the Germans, that will come, what time
Our victory makes to love no longer crime.
Peace to proclaim is always false and vain
In those who, vanquished, have not vengeance ta'en.
Let's wait the time when we the road command ;
When 'neath our feet—then hold them out the hand.
I can but bleed so long as France doth weep ;
For fitter time all talk of concord keep ;
Fraternity stammered out, and meant but half,
But makes the foe his shoulders shrug and laugh ;
The offer to be friends, and rancour stay,
To-morrow may be fine, but base to-day.

PAST PARTICIPLE OF THE VERB TROPCHOIR.

PAST participle of Tropchoir—man fraught
With virtues numberless—whose sum is nought ;
Brave, pious soldier, useless for attack,
Not a bad cannon—but too apt to back ;
Christian, upright, who two-fold merit has,
Of serving both his country—and the mass.
I do you justice ; why, then, at me carp ?
You make on me, in style oblique and sharp,
Assaults, which, if on Prussia made, had told
During the Prussian siege, and Russian cold.
Being an old man, I bore not arms.—Confest !
Glad to be shut in Paris with the rest ;

And sometimes, while did shot and bullets fall,
Would in my turn mount guard upon the wall:
Cried "Here!"—though old and by decree of Fate
Useless—yet did I not capitulate!
In your hands laurels, turned to nettles be,
You make your only sorties against me.
Of them in that bad siege we thought you slack:
Well, we were wrong—for me you kept them back.
You, who to cross the Maine were never known,
Why fly at me—since I left you alone?
Why should my blue cloth coat your eyes displease,
Or my kepi disturb your chaplet's ease?

Cold, famine, five long months we underwent,
And dread of worse.—And are you not content?
Brave, faithful, we ne'er harassed you at all.
Say, if you please, you're a great general;
But to dash through the gulf, through foes to break,
To sound the charge, thro' fire your host to take,
Barra, the subaltern, I covet more.

See Garibaldi, from Caprera's shore,
Kleber at Cairo, or on Venice walls
Manin.—Be calm! Great Paris dies and falls
Because you lacked not heart but faith.—Alas!
On you will history this sentence pass:
France, thanks to him, fought with but half her power,
In those great days, in strife's decisive hour;
The land which wounds, death foes could ne'er subdue,
Marched with Gambetta, halted with Trochu.

ON A BARRICADE.

UPON a barricade, across the streets,
Where blood of criminal and hero meets,
Ta'en with the men, a child of twelve or less!
"Were you one of them—you?" The boy said "Yes."
"Well," said the officer, "then you'll be shot;
Wait for your turn." The child saw on the spot
All his companions 'neath the wall fall low.
To the officer he cried, "Sir, let me go,
And take this watch to mother, who's at home."
"You wish to 'scape,"—"No! I'll come back."—
"This scum
Are cowards.—Where do you live?"—"There, by the well;
And, Captain, I'll return—the truth I tell."—
"Be off, young scamp." The child ran off, and then
At the plain trick laughed officer and men.—
Death's rattle mingling with their laugh was heard;
But the laugh ceased when suddenly appeared
The child, with bloodless cheek but dauntless eye,
And, leaning 'gainst the wall, said, "Here am I!"
Death fled ashamed.—The Captain said "Be free.

Child!—I know not in storms, where mingled be
All things right, wrong, knave, hero—in this fray,
What made you take a part;—But this I say,
Your soul, untaught, was yet sublimely great,
Good, brave—who in the very jaws of fate,
First to your mother walked—then to the grave!
Children have candour—men remorse may have.
No fault of yours to march where others led;
But noble, valiant thou! who chose instead
Of safety, life, spring, dawn, and boyish play,
The black blank wall where slain thy comrades lay."

O CHARLES, I FEEL THEE NEAR.

MY Charles, dear Martyr, still I feel thee near:
'Neath earth, where all must come,
I seek thee, and perceive pale dawn appear
Through the chinks of thy tomb.

The cradle, to the coffin near akin,
The dead restored doth bring;
And while I kneel and pray, my door within,
Two little children sing.

George, Jeanne, sing on; your father's loss ne'er know!
Restore him to my sight;
Dimmed with his shadow, gilded with the glow,
Sprung vaguely from his light.

Without this truth our love were incomplete—
That the dead, life renew;
A paradise, where star and angel meet,
Death's terrors can subdue.

This paradise on earth the Child portends:
Orphans, God still is yours—
God, who against the clouds my heart defends,
The sunlight on you pours.

Be joyful, then, while I am overborne;
To each his share is told—
An age well nigh I've lived; man feels forlorn,
So smitten when so old.

Who has done all the good, or half can show,
Of all that might have been?
Who has all hate subdued, and in his foe
Has still a brother seen?

E'en he who does his utmost does but ill,
Remorse all glory meets,
I know whene'er my heart did triumph fill,
It was at my defeats.

Conquered, I felt, through pain, more noble grown,
More tranquil than before ;
In causing pain I ne'er have pleasure known,
My own wounds please me more.

Sad law ! the more my fame the more my woe,
My height a target made ;
The more my branches stretch, the vaster grow,
More terrible my shade.

Hence 'tis I mourn. The while you charm my sight
You are the opening
Of the soul's flower, and all most sweet and bright
That does vast Nature bring.

George is the shrub that in my dark field thrives,
And Jeanne a bud, sweet elf !
Whose cup a spirit holds, and hears and strives
To bloom in speech herself.

Children go on, till stern affliction lours,
Ye young and rosy lives ;
Lisping your instincts, laughing 'mid the flowers,
And humming 'mid the hives.

Soon you will learn that all things fall and fade,
And thunders earthward hurled ;
Soon as the people you would heal and aid,
Atlas ! which bears the world.

You learn that man, whose lot to chance doth bend,
Blind to the future still,
Should live in such a way that in the end
Truth shall his dreams fulfil.

By me too shall my lot, whene'er I die,
Though hidden now, be found ;
I shall lean over you, whom mystery
And the glad dawn surround.

Then I shall know why exile and the grave
Should on your childhood fall ;
Why justice, gentleness for one to have,
Should give offence to all.

And I shall understand why whilst you sang
'Neath my funereal shade ;
I, who would pity shed on every pang,
With gloom am overlaid.

Wherefore so black with clouds my destiny ?
Wherefore such hecatombs ?
Why am I ever wrapt in Winter ? why
For me tombs follow tombs ?

Why battle, tears, regrets, all poured on me ?
Why griefs my days enclose ?
And why God chose I should the cypress be,
While you should be the rose ?

FROM

HOW TO BE A GRANDFATHER.

1877.

THE CICATRIX.

AN ugly cicatrix was crusted o'er ;
'Twas Jeanne's delight to pick and bleed the sore.
She comes and shows her hand in piteous case,
And says, "I've pulled the skin from off the place."
I scold ! she cries ; but when her tears I see,
I'm done ! "I yield ; come, make it up with me,
Jeanne ! On condition that again you smile."
The sweet child sprang into my arms ; the while
She said, with gently patronising air—
"I love you, so no more my hand I'll tear."
Now both are pleased and on equality,
She with my kindness, with her pardon I.

DRY BREAD.

JEANNE to dry bread and the dark room consigned
For some misdeed: I to my duty blind
Visit the prisoner—traitor that I am!
And in the dark slip her a pot of jam.
Those in my realm, on whose authority
Depends the welfare of society,
Were outraged. Jeanne's soft little voice arose—
"I'll put no more my thumb up to my nose;
No more I'll let the puss my fingers tear."
But they all cry—"That child is well aware
How weak and mean you are. She knows of old
You always take to laughing when we scold;
No government can stand; at every hour
Rule you upset. There is an end of power.
No laws exist. Nought keeps the child in bound,
You ruin all." I bow my head to ground,
And say—"Your grievous charge I can't oppose.
I'm wrong. Yes, by indulgencies like those
The people's ruin has been always wrought;
Put me upon dry bread." "I'm sure we ought,
And will!" Then Jeanne, from her dark corner, cries,
But low to me, raising her beauteous eyes—
(Love gives the lion's courage to the lamb!)
"And I will go and bring you pots of jam!"

AS JEANNE SAT ON THE GRASS.

AS Jeanne sat on the grass, rosy and grave,
I came and said—"What does Jeanne want to have?"
(For I obey the little charming love),
And then, as is my custom, watched, and strove,

What thoughts passed in that heavenly head, to know :
Said Jeanne, "I wish you would some creature show."—
I pointed out an ant upon the grass—
"See !" but this scarcely pleased the tiny lass.
"No" said she, "beasts are always big."
Their dream
Is size—they love the ocean's boundless stream,
Whose hoarse songs rock them ; and they find delight
In gloom, and in the wind's tempestuous flight ;
They like the dreadful ; they need prodigy.
"I've got no elephant at hand," said I.
"Will you have something else ? for so you shall."
Jeanne points to heaven, a finger pink and small.
"That !" said she. 'Twas the hour when eve draws near.
I looked, and saw the moon rise vast and clear.

YOU WANT THE MOON ?

"THE moon ! from out the well ?" "No, no, I want
The moon from heaven ; let's try !"—"Alas, I can't !"
'Tis always thus, your soul in its embrace,
Would clutch the moon, and I my hand through space
Stretch, and would pilfer Phœbe from the sky.
The blessed chance that a grandsire am I
Fell on my head, and made a gentle crack.
I feel, while seeing you, though fate hold back
Much bliss, it has not quite demolished me.
Let's talk ! The secret, George and Jeanne, d'you see,
Is this :—God knows what Grandfathers dare do ;
(He is Himself the great Grandparent too) ;
Good God is 'ware of us, for He foresees
What an old man will do, a child to please ;

He knows your words and laws I ne'er refuse
To follow,—well, His stars, He does not choose,
That we should touch ; so, for security,
He nails them up to the far azure sky.

THE MOON.

"WHAT greedy little things !" the mother cried.
"All things they want, and will not be denied.
Cherries, and apples from the trees and wall ;
And if they hear a cow low in the stall—
Milk ! quick ! But if you show them sugar plums,
The pair a very brigand band becomes,
And now they want the moon."

"Why not ? I hate
The nothingness of those we call 'the great !'
The grandeur of the small is my delight ;
Yes a child's soul has a strong appetite.
In truth that greedy babe fills me with thought,
Who sees a world in clouds, and now has sought
The moon. Why not ? What next ? Why, I aver
That if I had it, I would give it her.

What with it she might do, I cannot say.
But, moon ! your gloomy sphere, I'd give away
Your sky, where mystic Swedenborg is gone ;
Your dark enigma, fathomless, unknown !
Yes, I would give them, while I said, 'Be good'
Your obscure mask, the watchman of the cloud ;
Your craters, which fierce Northern blasts do sweep
Dark Lethean Solitudes and valleys deep.
Frightful or blest ; the hulks or Paradise ;
And, moon ! your mountains wan, of monstrous size.

Yes ; children kneeling on the ground would be,
I think, more fit to use the Moon than we ;
They'd place in it their vows, their hope, their prayer ;
Their young grave hearts by that adventurer,
Would be led up to the great God supreme.
Doubtless at night, when children sleep and dream,
Than ours their visions soar more wide and high.
As some in saints, in children faith have I,
When in these little dears I see no gall,
Nor fear.—if they for aught in heaven should call,
I'd give it if I could. The child, whate'er
It longs for, ought to have ; yes, e'en that sphere.
Do you have nought but what your merit brings ?
For instance—'twere amusing to see kings
Surprised that dwarfs should the earth's empire hold
Yes—I would give, angels with locks of gold
To you, who reign by love, if so I might,
Those distant worlds bathed in mysterious light,
Through space, by ministering spirits led,—
And the vast circles of the planets dread.

Why not ? I see you, you have done no crimes,
And I have faith in you. Yes, and sometimes,
Musing how great the soul, devoid of sin,—
When my thoughts roam, the infinite within
I deem—in sacred awe and ecstasy,
That it may be, in the Unknown, on high
A greater God than those our dreams have known,
Might e'en give stars, to spirits for their own."

THE GRANDFATHER'S SONG.

DANCE, little girls,
All in a ring ;
To see you so pretty,
The forest will sing.

Dance, little Queens,
All in a ring ;
Loves to Lasses
Sweet kisses will bring.

Dance, little Madcaps,
All in a ring ;
The crabbed old mistress
Will grumble and fling.

Dance, little beauties,
All in a ring ;
The birds will applaud you
With clapping of wing.

Dance, little Fairies,
All in a ring ;
With corn-flower garlands
And fair as the spring.

Dance, little women,
All in a ring ;
Each Beau to his Lady
Says some pretty thing.

A SLAP.

FROM the small hand was dealt a hearty tap—
"Grandfather, scold her." "What, give you a slap?"
The culprit you with greater love behold,
"Pray scold."—Says Age—"I can no longer scold,
Nothing but smiles are left me now-a-day."

Nero I've seen proscribe, Judas betray,
Satan victorious.—rogues and ruffians reign—
When one's deep heart has proved on these disdain,
When one has spent indignant rage and hates,
When, viewing all that the Church tolerates,
Which pulpits hail, and which the priest calls right;
When dauntless one has raved on some rough height,
When, on the invasion of the Parthian horde,
On Bonaparte's black crime and perjured word;
On laws and night doomed to a bloody tomb,
Barbés from Paris, Brutus spurned from Rome.
On tyrants, safe afloat, while wrecked the state—
When one has poured vials of lyric hate,
When one has dared the prison roof remove,
And drawn forth all the clamour from above;
The imprecations, lightnings, hisses, cries,
Of that dread holy cavern in the skies.
When one has during days that seemed as nights,
Rolled all the voices of the gulf—the slights—
The darkness, groans and tears for France betrayed.
Isaiah heaped on Juvenal; the shade
And ruin of infuriate poesy,
Like rocks of bitter hatred in the sky:
When 'gainst one's wrath, the tomb no shelter gave,
When eagles one has struck the dove to save—

Nimrod, Napoleon, Cæsar, one has beat,
And dared with scorn the whole Pantheon treat;
And oft to quake that lofty building taught,
And on and under earth has Justice wrought.
And all miasmas far and wide disperst,
Home somewhat weary one returns at last—
You don't get angry with familiar flies,
The little pecks that come from aviaries.
Sweet mocking laughter from melodious nests,
And all these little gods, or little pests,
Which babes and brats we call, enchantment bring,
And when they try to bite, you think they sing.
What peace in pardon !—Dante—Cato be,
Against the mighty, not the small. Shall we
Make a gruff voice, 'gainst the soft cry that charms,
Or shall we against sparrows don our arms?
Bah ! 'Gainst the dawn you don't in anger come,
And thunder should be mild and sweet at home.

JEANNE ASLEEP.

BIRDS sing, and I am plunged in reveries;
There lies she, rosy 'neath the flowery trees,
Rocked in her cot, as in a Halcyon's nest,
Soft, unperceiving in her tranquil rest,
How sun and shade successive on her fall.—
She's tiny, she is supernatural !
Vast loveliness of infant purity !
I muse—she dreams—beneath her brow there lie
Entanglements of visions all serene;
Cloud-women, every one a stately queen;
Angels and lions, with mild kindly air,
And poor good giants, of whom dwarfs take care;

Triumphs of forest flowers, and trophies bright
Of heavenly trees, all full of Fairy light
A cloud where half disclosed is Paradise—
Such are the sights in childhood's sleep arise
The baby's cradle is the realm of dreams
And real, each vision which God sends, it deems.
Thence their fresh smile, and their deep peace received.
Soon—one may say—"'Twas false all I believed"
But the good God, shall answer from the cloud
No !—you dreamed Heaven—Though shadows I've allowed
Heaven you will have—For the next cradle wait
The Tomb—'tis thus I dream—Sing birds elate !—

JEANNE ASLEEP.

SHE sleeps ! her eyes will soon expand again.—
My finger which she holds fills all her hand.
I read, while that nought wakes her I take care.
The pious journals !—All insult me there.
One treats as madmen all who read my lines,
One to the hangman all my works assigns,
Another while a tear bedews his lids,
Kindly, the passers-by to stone me bids.
My writings all are vile and poisoning,
Where all black snakes of ill their spirals wring ;
One credits hell, and me its priest declares,
Or Antichrist, or Satan, and one fears
At eve to meet me on the forest's brink.
One hands me hemlock, cries another "Drink !"
I sacked the Louvre—the hostages I killed
And fancied mobs with lust of plunder filled,
Paris in flames with red my brow should dye,

I'm cut-throat, butcher, thug, incendiary
Miser—and should have been less fierce and base
Had but the Emperor given me a place—
I'm general poisoner and murderer,
Thus all these voices I around me hear,
Heap insult on me without stint or stay.
The child sleeps on as if its dream would say
"O father! yet be quiet, yet benign—"
I feel her hand is gently pressing mine.

ORA AMA.

THE swift-foot Partridge scuds along the banks;
And as to make her join their choric ranks,
The circling clouds the virgin moon have ta'en.—

Dear little George, now tell me, shall we twain
Down there 'neath the old willow go and play.

Night falls—they bathe—the mower plods his way
Shouldering his scythe: he wipes his heated brow
Gleams indistinct and vague does twilight throw
Upon the forms, all laughing in the brook.

The Vicar passes by and shuts his book
Too late to read—The small remains of sun
Invite to prayer him who with love has done,
Love, prayer, are dawn and evening of the soul:
In nature much akin—'Neath love's control
And 'neath the power of prayer, we kneel alone,
To you when you're a man will this be known.
Meanwhile my large eyed child all this is told.

To you my George, as to my Charles of old,—
—When die the rose wings, then the blue ones grow,
And prayer, no less than love does boldness show
And Love as prayer, does equal fear display.

Still in the open glade 'tis almost day
The Angelus proclaims th' approach of night
O sky sublime dark mansion infinite !
Walls passing speech ! obscure—illuminate !

How in the home of thunder penetrate !
Youth becomes thoughtful ; age disquieted
Before th' unknown, vaguely with stars o'erspread
The trembling eve like shivering dawn we see

Prayer is the gate, and Love the opening key.

SPIRITS FLOWN.

SOULS brought back to memory
O my heart ne'er come again
Why do they persist. O why ?
Hidden from me to remain.

In the spheres with glory bright
In those azure rays above
Do they live in more delight
Than they tasted in our love ?

We beneath the sheltering bowers
Had a cottage at Saint Leu,
O how lovely were the flowers
And the sky how brightly blue.

'Mid the dry leaves on the ground
  In the woods we used to run
Beetles green, and gold we found
  On the old wall in the sun.

Laughing with the laughter gay
  Such as Eden heard of yore
We did, to each other say
  What we oft had said before.

Then I told some fairy tale—
  We were happy heaven knows
Merry cries of joy would hail
  E'en a bird that near us rose.

EVENING.

COLD is the fog, and the grey mists rise,
  And the herds of oxen to water go.
  Black clouds the pale wan moon peeps through,
And seems to light you, as by surprise.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The traveller walks, dark heaths between,
  Dark shade to left and dark shade to right,
  Pale is the west, and the east is light,
Here twilight, and there the moon is seen.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The witch squats down, and her lip sticks up,
To the ceiling the spider has fixed its net,
The goblin is in the marsh fire set
Like a pistil of gold, in a tulip's cup.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

On the hungry billow the lugger flies,
And shipwreck watches the mast alway;
The wind says "to-morrow"—the sea "to-day,"
The voices you hear are despairing cries.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The coach which from Avranches goes to Fougère
Cracking its whip like a lightning flash.
Now is the hour, when rave and clash,
Wondrous sounds in the murky air.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

In the deep thick woods, flare brillant lights,
The old grave yard, is a-top of the hill,
Whence does God find all the black to fill
The broken hearts, and the sleepless nights.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

Silvery pools, quiver over the sand,
The sea hawk sits, on the chalk cliff high,
The herdsman follows, with awe struck eye
The flight of devils, o'er sea and land.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

From the chimney pot rises, a long grey flag,
The woodcutter plods, with his load of wood,
You hear 'mid the rush, of the mountain flood
The crash of the boughs, which the torrents drag.

When 'twas or where I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

The starved wolf dreams, he the sheepfold seeks,
The rivers speed, and the dark clouds flit,
And behind the pane, where the lamp is lit
Dear little children, have rosy cheeks.

When 'twas, or where, I no longer know
Old Ivon used in his pipes to blow.

THE EPOPEE OF THE LION.

A LION in his jaws had ta'en a child
But had not hurt him—to the forest wild
Parent of springs and nests, he bore away
And kept him, as you pick a flower in May.
He scarce knew why, the child he never bit
Or that he scorned, or that he pitied it.
Noble though fierce, for so are lions made.
Meanwhile the little prince much sorrow had.
Within that cave the voice of terror filled :
The trembler's food, grass and raw flesh scarce killed,
He lived nigh dead, and stupified by fear :
A pretty boy. (His sire the king dwelt near)

Young, only ten years old, soft age, bright eyed.
The King one only daughter had beside,
Late born and scarcely past her second year.
The King now getting old had but one fear
His heir, the monster's prey ! Mazed cowering
And dreading more the Lion than the King
The land was scared—
A Hero passed that way,
And stopt, and asked, What is the matter say ?
This told, towards the cave he hastened him,

A hollow, w ere the sun itself looked dim.
Entering with caution ; In the cavern crouched
Th' enormous beast, on rocky pillow couched.

The forest marsh surrounded, deep in shade
Than bars to guard a cage, more branches had.
—That forest worthy of that consul shows,
A Menhir there to Irmensal arose.
It was much like the woods of Brittany
And had for bounds a mountain rough and high
One of those peaks which all the horizons shut
The cave was in the solid granite cut,
Girt round with mighty oaks in stormy state ;
Caves to the cities, give back hate for hate
A counter stroke of wrath, their shades display.—
—Beware the Lion !—seem the oaks to say.

In that dread palace did the hero go
The cave had the grand look of blood and woe
Which fits the dwelling of the great, the gloom
Th' affright proclaimed the place—a monarch's room
The bones upon the ground showed that its lord
Let himself lack for nought.—A window bored
A-top by some fierce blow which thunder dealt
Lit it ; a mist wherein did glimmer melt ;

Dawn to the eagle, to the owl 'twas night,
And conquerors never wish for clearer light.
Yet all was grand—he knew who ventured there
Its haughty owner slept on heathy lair.
Curtains, nor lace, nor silken, did he lack
And blood or water wont his thirst to slack.
No valet, cup, or napkin needed he.—
—The valiant Knight was armoured cap-à-pie.
He entered

And within the den he found
One of the greatest lords, with mane be-crowned
Ever was seen.—It was the lion fell
Who meditating sat. For none can tell
If monsters may not forest pontiffs be—
Vast claws the lion had and dread to see.
Sinister—not one, easy to outface,
The Knight approached but not with rapid pace
Sonorous was his step, his plume was red
Yet caused he not to move that stately head—
The beast was plunged in meditation still—
Theseus when at the gulf which Ixions fill
And Sisyphus, and dark Avernus wave
Beheld no vaster more terrific cave.
The Paladin, to whom said duty—"Go!"
Drew forth his sword. His head sedate and slow
The lion raised. A sight stout heart to quail.

The Knight then spake—"O dreadful monster hail
Hid in your cavern you a child retain
For him, your stifling den I search in vain
I nothing see—to take him back I come
We shall be friends if you will send him home;
Or I, a lion too, yourself shall kill
And give the boy his father's arms to fill

While here shall smoke your blood, not yet grown cold
This shall to-morrow's pallid dawn behold.

The Lion musing said—"So think not I."
On this the Knight stept forward valiantly,
Waved his great sword, and "King beware" he said.
He saw the Lion smile—a thing of dread!
Ne'er make a Lion smile—The deadly fight
Was cruel as twixt giants is but right.
(Like those who blood o'er India's jungles poured)
The brute thrust out his claws, the Knight his sword.
Each did the other seize: the foaming beast
In dreadful guise his human foe comprest,
By valour one, and one by hunger pushed—
The flesh beneath the mail the Lion crushed.
And fiercely kneading in his taloned wrath
Iron and steel: he made the blood start forth
From the whole armour's dismal crush: so dyes
A child his hand in juice of mulberries.
Then bit by bit in fragments cast away
Armlet and helm, he showed the bones the day.
And the great Knight was nothing but a kind
Of mud and slime the cuirass wall behind.
The Lion eat the Hero, then he prest
On the black rock his head, and sank to rest.
Next dared a Hermit, in that cave to stand
Grave, trembling, girt with cord, and cross in hand,
Entered.—There lay the Hero rent and gnawn.
Shapeless.—Woke up the lion with a yawn;
The monster ope'd his eyes, he heard a sound
Of breathing, saw a gown with rope tied round
—A great black cord—and then a man beneath
He finished yawning, showing all his teeth
Then stately spoke—as grating door might creak

"Well, what d' you want?" "My King!" "What King?" "I seek
My prince!" "Who?" "'Tis the child!" "D' you call that thing
A prince?" The hermit bowed—"Why mighty King
Hast ta'en the child?" "Because I'm dull, and he
In rainy weather keeps me company."
"Restore him." "No"—"With him what can you want?
D' you mean to eat him?" "Yes, if food were scant."
"Think how the father's heart his loss will rue!"
"'Twas men, the lioness my mother, slew."
"His father is your brother King!" "Not quite
His voice mere man's, mine doth all mortals fright.
He has a daughter still, if his son die,"
"'Tis little for a king." "My family
Is but the ragged rock, the forest dread,
The lightning flash that rages round my head,
Yet I'm content." "Show mercy to a king,"
"Mercy is nought—all here is suffering"—
"Will you have heaven? I offer God's blank cheque,"
"Foolish old saint be off, and save your neck."
He went.

The lonely lion with that dearth
Of memory known to monsters of the earth,
Sank back to sleep: waiting for blackest night.
Then of the Menhir, made the moon a spright,
The lake a shroud, the path a lie to seem,
And the black country indistinct, a dream—
And nought more in the cavern moved—the while
The sacred stars in westward march defile.
And turf the mole, and cricket hid from harm.
The mighty lion's breathing firm and calm
Assured the woodland beasts of safe repose.

Sudden, shouts, barkings, blasts of horns arose
Such noise of men, dogs, bands, would make you think
The forest all at once was mad with drink,
Which the Nymph hears, and trembles in her bed.
The clamour of a dreadful chase has spread
O'er shade, lake, meadow, forest, mountain steep,
And roused at last that vast terrific sleep.
The thickets purpled by the sport and routs,
And gleams were mingled with tempestuous shouts:
Baying of hounds you heard in search of prey,
You saw through glades dark shadows flee away.
Their pride, already conquest seemed to share—
'Twas like an army, and in truth they were
Soldiers, the king, the father sent to save
The prince his son, and to besiege the cave,
And thence to fetch the Lion's bloody skin.
Which side was here rebellious? Whose the sin,
Or on the side of man, or of the brute?
God only knows, who can the sum compute.
The soldiers strengthened well with wine and food,
With bows and spears are armed, their state is good.
Numerous and led by a bold chief they are:
Some late returning from a foreign war,
They are all valiant warriors, men of choice.
The Lion listened to that hostile noise,
For he his tragic lid had ope'd once more,
Though still his peaceful head the rock up-bore,
Only his monstrous tail was seen to wave.

Outside all round the vast and silent cave
Sounded the turmoil of the furious crowd
As flies surround a spider, buzzing loud,
Or swarm of bees about a captive bear—
The legion of the huntsmen shook with fear,
In ordered ranks they gird them to the fight.

They knew the monster's wondrous size and height ;
As monkeys' nuts, so he a hero eats,
More full of pride than tigers of deceits,
That his gaze made the eagle shroud his eye ;
Hence they on scientific siege rely.
The troop with axes hewed the bushes through,
Onward in serried ranks the soldiers go,
Each archer's shaft a full stretched string receives—
—Then all were still, that on the crisp dead leaves
The Lion's step should sound, whene'er he came—
The dogs who silence learn as need may claim
Went on before them, open mouthed but still ;
The torches with their blaze the copses fill,
And as beyond, around, they cast their glare,
Lit the massed trees, that quiver in the air,
Thus skilful foresters a chase direct—
Soon twixt the boughs the cavern they detect,
A shapeless pile (the tangled forest's close),
Yawning but mute like a still dream arose,
And seemed the threatening host not e'en to see.
From hearth that smoulders, there some smoke must be,
In town besieged the 'larum bell you hear—
Here nothing of the kind ; in dubious fear
All watched (while spear or bow tight clutched they have)
The awful quiet of that epic cave.
The hounds their whisperings to each other made,
The danger that keeps silence, hid in shade
More dreadful is than loudest storm or wind.
Yet had they come the savage beast to find !
They march, their eyes upon the forest bent,
Not without fear, still on the quest intent.
The scouts look out, and raise their torches high,
Fixed on the yawning cavern every eye,
Shivered the trees those silent witnesses.

In order march a thousand men—no less.
Sudden the formidable face was shown.
They see the Lion.—All, at once had grown
Impregnable—the forest seemed more vast,
A shuddering fear e'en through the bravest past.
Yet shuddering, still their bows the archers drew.
The arrows on the mighty Lion flew
And pierced him ; but the Lion whom they scare
No more than Pelion and than Ossa care
For storms, erects his mane, looks calmly round,
Most of the arrows shaking to the ground.
Another (by so many darts attained)
Had surely thought that full enough remained ;
Or would have fled.—The blood now streaked his side,—
Of that he took no heed.—The troop he eyed,
And the men, dazed in such a place to be,
Doubt if a monster or a god they see.
The dogs struck mute, slunk 'mid the armed men,
And in the silence, the proud lion then
Uttered, through the great wood, and sleeping marsh,
One of those monstrous roars, sonorous, harsh,
Which of all awful things most terrifies,
And hearing which the half waked thunder cries
To heaven's depths, "Who thunders there below ?"

And all was done ! flight swept away the foe
As does the wind a mist, and all that host
Routed to heaven's four quarters, scattered, lost,
Fainted away before that dreadful roar.
Chiefs, soldiers (in a moment all was o'er),
Deeming the place possest, whence issued forth
Some dreadful evidence of Nature's wrath,
Lost, trembling, crawling, hid, away they go.
The monster cries, "Mountains and forests know
One lion free—outweighs a thousand slaves."

Beasts have a cry, as craters lava-waves,
And that eruption mounting to the sky
Mostly restores them to tranquillity.
Lions are perhaps than gods more pitiful.
Of old when famed Olympus bore the rule
Some Hercules might say—"Let's once for all
Strangle the race of Lions great and small."
But Lions said—"Our foes show pity on."

Howe'er this Lion, twilight's gloomy son,
Remained morose, dark, grieved, he was of those
Tardy and hard his spirits to compose.
A kind of savageness his rage possest.
The beast would sleep when sinks the sun to rest;
With fawning dogs to deal, delights him not.
This Lion had been victim of a plot.
They had poured insults on the noble wood—
He climbed the mount and on the summit stood,
And 'gan to speak, and as the sower his seed
Casts afar off, so doth his clamour speed,
And to the King within the city came.

"King! your attack is a disgrace and shame;
Up to this time I have not hurt your boy,
But now I warn you by the earth and sky,
Your town I enter on the morrow morn.
To you your son still living shall be borne
(Let all your menials there my presence meet),
And in your palace, I your son shall eat."—

Night wore away, the streams sped 'neath the grass,
And the dark clouds along the heavens pass.

The morrow in the town this meets the eye,
Dawn—solitude,—folk who for mercy cry

And flee, looks full of fear that quick retreat,
And the vast Lion stalking through the street.
Close hid in cellars were the people all.
Why strive? Not one is seen to man the wall.
Unwatched the city gates were open wide,
Upon such beasts, scarce earthly—doth abide
So great a terror,—mystery so black—
Their cavern is so dark and dread a track,—
That 'tis nigh impious, and scarce wise to stay,
When they are pleased to wander on their way.
Thus towards the Palace with its golden dome
Did the fell Lion slow and thoughtful come.
Still bristling with the darts he seemed to scorn,
Like back of oak, by wounds of axes worn,
The tree dies not, no archers now in view
Gravely he marches on, the city through,
The trembling people left the beast alone.
On came the Lion, and dread sight was shown
The fainting child in his vast jaws to bear,

Are little princes human? Yes they are;
And holy pity wept the skies beneath.
The tender captive 'twixt those fatal teeth,
On either side that mouth was seen to hang
Livid, and yet uninjured by the fang.
The prey was as a gag between his jaws,
The Lion could not roar—Of grief a cause
To the fierce beast—deep rage his calm belies
His silence brighter made his flaming eyes.
No bow shot forth from any embrasure,
Perhaps they feared the bolt might not be sure,
And, aimed at the triumphant monster ill,
Might miss the Lion, and the prince might kill.

Then as upon the mountain top he swore
The town as galleys scorned, the beast forbore,

The palace sought—tired all this cowardice
To see, and wishing some one to address—
Wide swung the gates, as reeds blown by the wind.
The Palace entered—no one could he find.—

Though weeping ; like the rest the King had fled,
Eager to live, although his child was dead.
Deeming his subjects' welfare with him bound—
Now, your wild beast, sincere is ever found
And likes not fear—The Lion felt distress
At his own greatness, and man's littleness ;
And swore—"By Night."—which is the Lion's soul—
"The son I'll eat, the sire is base and foul !"
Dreadful he passes to the corridor
And roams 'neath roofs with gilding covered o'er.
He saw the throne, none on it, chambers red,
Green, yellow, empty seats whence all had fled.
The beast from hall to hall did slowly steal,
Seeking some place convenient for his meal.
He hungered—The dread marcher suddenly
Stopt.
In a deep recess a garden nigh,
A little thing forgotten in the flight,
And rocked in childhood's dreams of vague delight :
(While the sun through the trees, steeped every curl
With gold), awoke—it was a little girl ;
The monarch's other child, guards, nurses, gone ;
She sang, for children sing though all alone.

A heavenly voice—than angel harps more sweet,
A little mouth whose smile was infinite,
A cherub ; toys upon her cradle rest,
Crèche for a Jesus fit—for bird a nest.
Two deep blue eyes, full of mysterious light,
Neck, feet, arms, legs, all bare, a pretty sight :

A slip just reached her waist, and there she lay
A star in heaven's blue—an April ray,
Heaven's lily that this earth deigned to adorn—
Such was the child more lovely than the morn.
It was on this, the Lion fixed his look.

He entered, all the floor and ceiling shook.

Over the toys that o'er the table spread
The Lion stretched his vast terrific head :
Monster, and Emperor, he spread dismay,
More frightful holding in his jaws the prey.
Him the child saw, and "Brother, brother," said,
"My Brother!" then she stood, by light flashed red
Which warmed her ; and appeared to deify—
And on the forest monster gazed, whose cry
Had Typhon and Briareus terrified !—
Who knows what thoughts in these blest heads reside
—She stood upright beside the cradle's rim,
And with her little finger threatened him.

Then by the cradle made of silk and lace,
The monstrous Lion did her brother place
As gently as a mother could, and this
He said—"There—don't be angry—Here he is."

HOW TERRIBLE THE FACE OF BRUTES.

HOW terrible the face of Brutes.—The Unknown!
We feel, th' Eternal problem, darkly shown,
Unfathomed, which we Nature designate :
We gaze on shapeless shadow, chance or fate,

Rebellion, slavery, the hated yoke
When in the Lion's dreadful face we look.
The Monster stormy, hoarse, wild—but not free—
Stupor! What means that strange complexity,
Splendour and horror mixed!—The Universe
Contending good and ill, blessing and curse
Where stars, that brilliant livid swarm, we trace
Seeming in prison ta'en, fleeing through space
Tossed out at hazard, as we toss a die
For ever chained, yet seeking liberty?
What is that marvel, heavenly, horrible,
Where, in the Eden seen, we guess a Hell?— [sight,
Where hopes betrayed—dread thought! sink out of
Infinite suns, in night as infinite;
Where in the brute, of God is lost the trace?

When they behold the Monster face to face,
The Seers, rapt dreamers of the forest drear,
Wise prophets who mysterious voices hear,
Feel somewhat in the brute immense and dread.
For them the bitter grin of that dark head
Is the abyss, which shuns their scrutiny.
Th' Eternal secret which can brook no spy,
Which lets not in its mystery intrude
Those deep, pale, thinkers of the solitude,
Men to whom darkness lays its secrets bare
Feel the Sphinx angry grow, and stands their hair
On end— their blood within their veins runs dry
Before the frown of the dark prodigy.

TO GEORGE.

MY George, to some Menagerie come on,
Buffon or Circus, anywhere will do :
Still in Lutetia visit Babylon,
And without leaving Paris,—Timbuctoo.

Those Leopards see, that were from Tyre ta'en,
The growling Bear, the Boa's silent might ;
Zebra, Ounce, Jackal, and those poets' twain,
The sun-drunk Eagle—Vulture filled with night.

The wily Lynx, the Snake that both ways rolls,
To which his treacherous friend, Job likens well
Black Tigers, through whose ebon mask two holes
Of lived flame, disclose the fires of hell.

To see wild birds—the shiver of their wings
Is nice—we'll view while safe as bars can make
Wolves, Jaguars, and Gazelles, slim graceful things,
And mark the beauty of the painted snake.

Leave noise of men, come to the animals,
Let's lean athwart the stifling shade around,
O'er lower griefs, and vague reproachful calls :
O'er tangled steps of mysteries profound.

For beasts are shade, in darkness wandering
You know not what they hear, what understand ;
Haggard their cries, their eyes death-glances fling,
Yet their assertion is sublime and grand.

We, who here reign, what useless things we say
And know not of the evil which we do ;
Truth comes, we drive it as a foe away,
And against reason, reasons have to show.

Corbière at bar—Frayssinous in the church
I much inferior to wild beasts conceive ;
The soul, in forest, learns, without a search—
I doubt in temples, on the mount believe.—

God darkly names Himself, by Night's dim word
Wild Pelion than Quirinal awes us more,
'Tis well, when we the talk of men have heard
To go and hear the mighty Lion roar.

TO JEANNE.

THAT I too like the beasts I freely own ;
You they amuse, and me they teach, I feel
That not for nought, in those fierce heads is shown
By God, the mystic gloom that woods reveal.

Curious, and born to pity and believe
To ask (watching the asp crawl 'neath the rose)
Why woman fears that Satan will deceive :
While flowers fear not the snakes however close.

While we impose commandments on the earth
Kings copying apes, who deeds of Kings repeat,
Doubtful which race gave to the other birth—
—Below in fated dread beneath our feet,

A dim strange world with wonder sees us now
And dreams— beneath a yoke too often vile
The lowly monster, and wan brute we bow,
Deeming us Gods, though we are fiends the while.

O tragic unions ! Laws past fathoming !
Know we the final word ? see we the end ?
What hideous spectre may from Venus spring !
What Angel from Behemoth may descend !

Gulf ! Height ! Transfiguration ! Mystery !
The soul shall cast that rag, the body by !
The creature abject now, sublime shall be
The hated grub, the much loved butterfly.

LÆTITIA RERUM.

ALL nature thrills with joyfulness,
The winter flies, and hides away,
The year throws off its faded dress,
The earth puts on its best array.

Now all things new and stirring are,
Youth wantons bright in every place,
Love's beauty-season everywhere
Is mirrored in the fountain's face.

Trees look their best—All flowers anew,
Try which shall greatest charms reveal,
Each decks itself in fairest hue—
The ugliest e'en are full of zeal.

Nosegays sprout from the mountain side,
Light leaves from breezes, kisses take ;
June laughs to see so Sunday-fied
The common people of the brake.

Yes, 'tis an universal *fête*,
Thistles, those rustics, join the cheer
In summer's palace, fine and great
The stars light up the chandelier.

Grass now is cut—soon comes the corn,
The mower sleeps beneath the May,
And upon every breeze is borne
The fragrance of the new-made hay.

Who sings? The minstrel of the night!
The chrysalis no more is found;
The grub is winged, and takes to flight,
Casting his fetters to the ground.

The water spider swims his round,
Shady the vines, the skies are clear.
Day trembles, gnats with buzzing sound
Pursue and whisper in your ear.

The bee flits on from bloom to bloom,
Hornets and wasps are on the wing;
To all these tipplers of perfume
A tap is opened by the spring.

Enters—his shirt in crumpled plight—
The drone who lives to sleep and dine;
A Lily is a napkin white,
A Pink a beaker brimmed with wine.

Flies drink the red and gold that lie
Within the blooms that half expand;
The drunkard is the butterfly,
Roses the taverns close at hand.

Full are they of ecstatic glee,
  Tipplers true liberty possess ;
Writ on no flower do you see
  "This is the home of soberness."

The providential luxury
  Sparkles and shines with lavish store,
That unique, priceless book the sky
  Is by the morning gilded o'er.

Children, within your glances bright,
  I think the opening heaven to see ;
Your laugh is like the Spring's delight,
  Your tears are as the dawn to me.

IN THE WOODS.

IN the free wood I like to stray,
  Nature's true flowers must I love ;
When Autumn comes the swallows say,
  "'Tis time for us to pack and move."

When frost and snow give way to Spring,
  I see the buds, now coming back,
Are not in want of anything,
  And in the forest nothing lack.

I say to brambles, "Maidens grow,"
  To the wild thyme, "Perfume the air,"
And to the line of flowers that blow
  On banks, "Now make your hems with care."

I watch the door half opening,
  The wind that's blowing from the height,
Because some roguery to bring
  Is that deceiver's chief delight.

I start as soon as dawn awakes,
  To see if nothing goes awry ;
Of the precautions April takes,
  'Gainst January's perfidy.

All rise again, though all must die,
  And, I behold with raptured thought,
Youth's unrestrained recovery
  By envious darkness vainly fought.

I love the rustling copses dun,
  Red lichens, and the ivy green,
And all the adornments which the sun
  Invents to make the ruin's sheen.

When flowery May bedecks with plumes,
  Old dismal discontented towers ;
I bid those antiquated tombs
  Leave Spring at will to scatter flowers.

IN THE MEADOWS.

O'ER wood and stream I muse with tenderness,
  Of birds and flowers a Grandfather no less.
I pity feel for all the things that are,
And bid the children even roses spare.
Scare neither plant nor animal ; I say
Laugh without frightening, without harming play,

Jeanne and her brother George, pure browed, bright
eyed,
Sparkle amid the flowers expanding wide.
Harmless I wander in this Paradise ;
I hear them sing, and musing thoughts arise,
In their glad games how little heed they take
Of the sad sound the turning pages make,
Of Fate's mysterious volume.—From the priest
How far they are—How near to Jesus Christ.

THE POOR CHILDREN.

TAKE, of that little being, care,
For he is great and God contains—
Before their birth these infants are
Lights in the heaven's azure fanes.

They the kind hand of God bestows ;
They come, and the free gift is His ;
His wisdom in their laughter shows,
And His forgiveness in their kiss.

Their gentle radiance makes us bright ;
Their right is pleasure to receive ;
They hunger !—Heaven weeps at the sight,
And when they're cold, the Angels grieve.

When Innocence in is distress,
Man it convicts of infamy.—
Men over Angels power possess.—
Ah, me ! What thunders fill the sky,

When God, seeking these tender things,
Whom, as we slumber in this shade,
He sends us decked in Angel's wings,
Finds them in rags and filth arrayed.

SPOILT CHILDREN.

SEEING that children fear me not, and I
Am made to muse by conquering Infancy,
Staid, serious folk knit their dark brows amazed—
A Grandfather broke loose from bounds and crazed
Is what I am.—Wrapt in paternity
Nought but a good old headstrong smile am I.
Dear little ones, I'm Grandfather complete.
He loves those dwarfs with the sky's blue replete—
He longs to get the moon, Heaven's silver pelf,
For them, perhaps a little for himself.
Not sane in fact—'tis terrible, I reign
Ill, and by fear will ne'er my realm restrain.
My subjects Jeanne and George, the Greybeard I,
Grandsire uncurbed, mad with benignity.
All laws I make them overleap, indeed
Their roseate commonwealth to crimes I lead,
Seduced by harmful popularity.
You may allow the old, whose night is nigh,
His love of grace, and laughter, and the morn.—
But of the babes whose crimes are not yet born,
I can but ask, Should a Grandsire be so
Anarchical as with his hand to show
As where in shade adventures may be met
The cupboard where the pots of jam are set?
Yes! Housewives, weep!—for them, by fiendish plots
I do confess I stole those sacred pots!

Dreadful ! For them climbed chairs, if to my eyes
Discovered hid a plate of strawberries
Kept for ourselves.—The vile Grandfather cries,
"Dear, little, greedy birds of Paradise,
They are for you—but look into the street ;
Poor children—one a babe—your eyes will meet.
They're hungry, bring them up and share the prize."

To doff the mask—I hold it prejudice ;
I deem those rules stupid mistakes and vain,
That crags from the great eagles would restrain,
Love from white bosoms, and from children joy.
I call it stifling, priggish idiotcy.
I laugh when we our manly fury vent,
A child from picking apples to prevent ;
When we permit our kings false oaths to plight :
Defend your apples less, and more your right,
Peasant !—When flows the tide of infamy,
When bourgeois shameless, voting "Yes" we see
Basile, a banker—Scapin, a mitred lord ;
When, as we move a pawn upon the board,
A bold adventurer stakes a crime on France,
And passionless and dark plays with the chance,
Or of a convict's chain, or Emperor's throne !
When this is suffered, and no fury shown,
And treason reigns, sunk in foul revelry ;
Then I for refuge among cradles fly.
I seek the gentle dawn, and more delight
In the pure troops of merry elves and bright,
Doing whate'er they like to pass the time,
Than in a crowd, accepting festive crime,
And Paris soiled by the lower empire—
And in spoilt children, than in rotten sire !

SET FREE.

AT Winter's close one only bird remained
Within the cage which late a host contained,
A void was made in the great Aviary ;
One Titmouse, late familiar but now shy,
Was left to solitude and dismal thought,
Cake, water, seed, to have, and want for naught—
To see a fly within its cage beguiled
Was its whole happiness, 'twas now grown wild ;
No mate, not e'en a sparrow, had it got—
A cage is well, but a blank desert not !—
Sad bird to roost alone, and every morn
Alone to dress its feathers all forlorn.
The wretched little thing left in the lurch
Grew shy, with turning his deserted perch.
Sometimes, as a set task, he used to fly
From stick to stick with endless industry
And frantic speed. Then suddenly would sit,
Dumb, gloomy, sad, nor from his corner flit.
To see his feathers all puffed out, his eye,
His head put 'neath his wing though day was high,
One guessed his mourning, grief, and widowed state—
Lost every song and every tuneful mate.—
This morn I entered through the cage's door.

Two poles, a grot, a grove, and nothing more
Furnished the prison, where a fountain thrills :—
Wide curtains through the winter, guard from chills.

At the dark giant's sight—the bird afraid,
Fled, high and low, to find concealing shade ;
In agony of fright nought could assuage—
(The weak, dismayed, show impotence of rage),

He fluttered off before my appalling hand,
And I to catch him on a table stand.
Then terrified, o'ercome, and uttering cries,
He in a corner sank—I seized the prize.
What 'gainst a monster can an atom do?
How, when th' enormous phantom clutches you,
Can it—wan fragile captive!—be opposed?
It lay still in my hands, its eyes were closed,
Its beak was wide, its neck hung from distress,
Its wings seemed dead, dumb, sightless, motionless;
I felt its heart fast on its sides to strike.

To his bright sister Dawn, is April like
As dazzling he, as she is pink and fair,
As one who wakes and laughs, he has the air,
We're in the month of April, and my lawn,
My garden, and my neighbour's, and the dawn,
All heaven and earth filled with that rapture ar
Which in the flowers exhale—glows in the star
The furze in gala dress, gilds the ravine,
Where the bees make their murmurings divine;
Bent o'er the cress, the myosotis dips
Its flowrets in the spring, and freshly sips.
The grass is happy—winter melts away;
Nature seems glad, that all things own her sway,
Scents, songs, and rays—and a kind host to be—
All space feels love.

I left the Aviary,
And toward the balcony, all ivied o'er,
Approached. The bird still in my hand I bore.
All things to throb, glow, laugh, renew, I see;
Then opening wide my hand, I said—"Be free."
Hasted the Bird 'mid waving boughs to fly,
And in the radiant Spring's immensity

I watched the little soul depart afar,
In that pink light where flames commingled are,
In the deep air, the countless trees above,
Flying to the vague call of nests and love,
Wildly it soared towards other wings ; nor knew
Which palace best to choose ; to boughs it flew,
To flowers, to streams, to woods in Spring's device,
With extasy of entering Paradise.

Then in the light and in the clear expanse,
Seeing that flight, and that deliverance,
And that poor soul in port safe hid away—
Musing, I said—"Death's part I've played to-day

From THE FOUR WINDS OF THE SPIRIT.

1881.

WEEPS THE EARTH IN WINTER'S DAY.

WEEPS the earth in winter's day,
Cold the sun, and weak and dreary;
Comes full late, soon goes away,
Of his visit sick and weary.

Grace is from their idyls flown.
Ah! to love!—Sun—let us try!—
"Earth, where are your roses gone?"—
"Where your rays, star of the sky?"

Some excuse he makes for flight—
Wind or clouds—it rains, it snows;
"See, my dear!" he cries, "'tis night!"
Which he makes as off he goes.

Like a lover, who each day
From his heart the fetters breaks,
And not knowing what to say,
Hastes, and off himself betakes.

SONG.

BEAUTY to boast, methinks 'tis rather late,
Queen Margaret: in the flowerless fields the snow
Will soon descend, and icy winds will blow.—
—Pilgrim, with smiles I winter's change await.

Beauty to boast, methinks 'tis rather late,
Star of the evening, when each faded ray
Is now restored to the great orb of day.—
—Pilgrim, with smiles I the night's change await.

Beauty to boast, methinks 'tis rather late,
My soul—what! joyous 'neath my load of woes?
Dazzled, I see your wings with pride unclose.—
—Pilgrim, with smiles I death's approach can wait.

TO THE CLOUDS AND THE BIRDS.

CLOUDS, heaven's virgins fair and sweet,
And birds! soft children of the skies.
Ye purities! the dawn doth greet,
Gazed on by Ocean's azure eyes.

Ye by Eve first of all things hight,
Ye for whom God, who rules on high,

Created that abyss called light,
And made those wings called liberty.

Ye, from the gulf in which we are,
Whom in the vast vague sky we see;
Ye, who for Romes little care,
And deem that anthills nobler be!

Ye, whom the dew with mist invests,
And feeds and forms with tears and showers;
Ye birds who spring from hidden nests,
Ye clouds that rise up from the flowers.

Speak! ye from day who spring elate,
Through an unbounded course to fly,
Whom doth the ether penetrate
With glory and serenity.

Ye who see mountains bleak and bold,
And morning fresh, and night's dark face;
Who all the earth and seas behold—
Free wanderers of the azure space.

Say what doth the calm night proclaim
What think th' inhabitants of light,
Of all this sordid human shame
That crawls beneath the Infinite.

SONG.

I LOVE to fancy in long veils, and calm,
Chanting their holy hymns, a Virgin band,
As from the church they pass, each with a palm
In hand.

A dream that pleases me when wrapt in gloom
  Is children's games, or dance, or hide and seek;
Glad laughter fills their lips, the roses bloom
  Their cheek.

Another dream there is, to me most dear—
  A gentle girl in youth's first mystery,
Who knows not why she weeps, yet fills a tear
  Her eye.

Another sight, lovely 'midst loveliest things,
  Is Jeanne and Margaret. Stars! a vision sweet!
Coursing the meads at eve—as light as wings
  Their feet.

But of all dreams that can my thoughts afford,
  This to my soul does most delight impart—
A tyrant's gasping groan, while stabs a sword
  His heart.

A WALK AMONG THE ROCKS.

THE Sun declined, eve quickly to pursue,
  Made brown th' horizon: on a stone to rest
An old man, whose remaining days are few,
  Sat musingly, his eyes towards the west.

An aged man, a shepherd, mountain bred,
  Who erst young, poor, of free and happy mood,
At eve, when shades were o'er the mountain spread,
  His flute made merry music through the wood.

Now rich and old, the past his spirit fills,
  Laborious chief of a large family;

The while his flocks are gathered from the hills,
  Earth he forgets, and looks but on the sky.

The day that ends is worth the opening days,
  The old man mused beneath heaven's azure copes ;
The boundless ocean stretched beneath his gaze,
  As at the gate of death the good man's hopes.

O solemn scene ! the sea that ever threats,
  Rocks, winds that silent now, restrain their cries,
The old man looking at the sun that sets,
  And the sun looking on the man who dies.

TO MY DAUGHTER ADÈLE.

NEAR me you slept, a fresh and rosy child,
  Cradled, the infant Jesus thus had smiled.
So calm, so soft your sleep of purity,
You could not hear the birds sing in the shade,
And I inhaled all the sad sweetness made
  By the mysterious sky.

I heard the angels round your pillow meet ;
And as I watched your slumbers, on your sheet
  Jasmine and pinks I strewed silent and still.
Marking your lids fast closed in sleep, I prayed,
And my eyes filled with tears, while I pourtrayed
  What might the future fill.*

My turn will come for sleeping, and my bed
Of darkness formed will be so drear and dread,
  That song of birds my ears shall waken not ;

* A melancholy fate awaited her. She survives her father but has lost her reason.

In that bleak night, you will pour, O my Dove !
The prayers, the tears, the flowers my grave above,
Which I poured o'er your cot.

EXILE.

IF I might, O ! my native land,
Thy almond groves and lilies see,
And tread upon thy flowery strand—
Ah me !

If I might—but, O father mine,
And mother, it can never be—
Pillowed upon your grave recline—
Ah me !

If in your cold constraining bier,
I could speak to you noiselessly ;
Abel, Eugene, my brothers dear—
Ah me !

If I was able ; O my dove !
And thou, her mother—quick to flee ;
To kneel, to fall your graves above—
Ah me !

Oh ! towards that star which lonely is,
How would I stretch—your devotee—
My arms ;—and how the ground would bless—
Ah me !

Far from you, dear ones ! when I weep,
I hear the roaring of the sea ;
Fain would I go, but here must keep—
Ah me !

Yet if dark Fate, which clouds enclose,
Watching my steps fall wearily,
Deems the old Pilgrim spent, it knows
Not me.

IN VAIN I SEARCH LIKE ONE DISTRAUGHT.

IN vain I search like one distraught,
My house from floor to floor,
Till I am by the neighbours thought
As one whose mind gives o'er.

Vain search, for she is dead, is dead,
She will return no more ;
Alas ! for ever lost and fled,
And open still the door.

I start when rings the bell—I own
I hope to find her near.
Glad Autumn days, where are you gone,
O God ! when she was here.

That soul has ta'en its upward flight,
I still below must keep ;
To stars that glitter in the night
I stretch my arms and weep.

Pressed 'gainst the window, I repass
In dreams the days of yore :
All lost !—that good sweet heart, alas
Which sang—I have no more.

ON THE CLIFFS.

O SWEET Spirit ! you smile, I ween,
Though you are unfelt, unseen ;
I sad and lone
Feel your garment floating nigh,
While the dark waves hurry by,
And sob and moan.

In night's solitary hours,
Song my wounded heart outpours,
The rocks among ;
And the air around me brings
Thrillings of your angel wings
To join my song.

Of poor neighbouring folk my dreams—
Born beneath those roofs, where gleams
The wakeful light—
Grizzled beard, or golden hair,
What do the deep waters care
In stormy night ?

Those by others lost I weep,
All doth one same sorrow steep—
The same blow shocks.
Here upon this iron coast
All in one same vessel lost—
On the same rocks.

Captains stout, and sea boys small,
Whom did such dear voices call,
And such heart prayer.
They are mixed in ocean's space ;
Silver fish each other chase
Amid their hair.

'Neath the dark waves, without number,
See them in the deep ooze slumber,
Marred by its stain ;
Wide their mouths are—dreadful sight,
As if gaping with affright,
Death's draught they drain.

Pallid wandering ghosts they be,
Whom their cottage ne'er shall see,
Nor home receive ;
Woods, fresh green, of beech or oak,
Meadow, flower, their chimney smoke,
At golden eve.

In their eyes the senseless wave,
Which doth ever flee and rave,
While winds pursue,
Doth, sad change, the land replace,
Paths their steps shall ne'er retrace,
Nor eyes shall view.

Ghosts and corpses, wan and worn,
These from port to port are borne
By ebb and flow.
Dawn they never more shall greet,
Nor shall eve its music sweet
On them bestow.

Yet our musing fancy rests
'Mid these rocks upon those guests,
Of th' unknown bourne !
Through the shivering sea depths gone,
To that shadow land whence none
Hither return.

'Twas the husband, 'twas the child,
Called their names with voices wild,
And boding vows,
When at eve the Pharo's glare,
Or the morning torches flare
Alarm arouse.

One cries—"Soon I hope shall all
Safe return—James, Peter, Hal,
Louis and John,
August next, when grapes are black;"
But the night wind murmurs back—
"Vanished and gone!"

Says another—"'Mid the storms,
Closely watch, you'll see the forms
Of the drowned dead.
When the eve falls then they come,
Every billow is a tomb,
Whence comes a head."

'Tis in this unbridled main
Souls are borne to heaven again,
Heaven's birds of bliss.
Every billow is a grave;
O my dove! still every grave
A cradle is.

TO GARIBALDI, AFTER THE BATTLE OF MENTANA.

I.

THESE youths, true sons of Rome's great chiefs of old,
Brutus, Camillus, Pætus true and bold,
What was their force? four thousand barely told.
How many died? six hundred!—count, behold
Limbs torn and blasted on the blood-stained wold,
Arms severed, eyes dashed out, and bodies made
Prey to the howling wolves from caverns strayed.
Flesh scattered 'mid the shrubs by cannon cleft,
Alas! is all that treachery has left—
All that did coward traps and ambush spare
Of those great hearts, those souls devoid of fear.
See them mowed down as with a single blow.
Their crime? Rome's thraldom they would overthrow,
For truth, for right (those idle dreams) they bled.
Come, mothers, pick your children from the dead,
For to his mother, man is still a child.
See that gaunt brow with wounds and blood defiled?
'Tis the fair head, poor woman, where your eyes
Saw the dawn break, the thinking soul arise;

Those lips whose death-foam does the heather stain,
O nurse ! once mocked thy song with lisping strain ;
Those hands now cold, and to closed eyelids pressed,
Of old were tightened to your loving breast.
Here the first-born, there does the youngest lie—
O death of hope, O depth of misery !
O fount of tears !—They claimed their Tiber's stream ;
Youth without liberty they worthless deem.
They wished to see their mighty eagle soar,
They wished to liberate, console, restore ;
Each one his patriot bosom wounded felt
By every insult to his country dealt ;
All things to reckon save their foes they knew.
Young, valiant, fair—and dead—dear friends, adieu ;
Your hours of light and love are passed away,
No more with you your affianced brides will stray
Amid the flowery meads : Christ, kind and good !—
How steeped that murderous Priest, in martyr blood.

Pontiff ! Elect ! touched by the Angel's palm,
Whom God commands to hold (benign and calm)
The Gospel ; to illume the world's sad night,
Brother to all men, decked in garb of white,
But half on earth, and half within the grave ;
The servant of the Lamb who died to save,
Who doth with trembling hand Heaven's lily bear—
Man near thine end, for sparse and white thy hair,
Through which the grave winds play : His vicar, who
The other cheek held to the smiter's blow ;
You, who to pardon, boundless power possess,
Now nought else find to love, nought else to bless,
On this dark earth which strife and sorrow fill,
Save guns which twelve lives in one moment kill !

The second Julius reappears more fell,
And bloody Popedom owns the work of hell !

Well did the murderous arm its task complete.
Those kings ! their thunder is with fraud replete.
Frenchmen ! to have been great, doth danger own !
Once, one 'gainst ten you fought, now ten 'gainst one.
France, they dishonour you, they drag, they tie ;
Force you Italian freedom to destroy.
Thus are you used !—Giant to dwarfs a prey—
See down the Apennine that blood stream stray.

O sinister old man ! at thy command
The Vulture tears the skull from out the land.
'Tis thou dost bid the croaking raven come.—
May all his dreams be haunted by the tomb !
By scenes where wolves by scent of blood are led,
And birds alight upon the slaughtered dead ;
In sleep still let him trample on the killed.

The guns are hot, their work they well fulfilled.
The balls you blessed their promise e'en surpass—
'Tis done—the dead are dead.—Now say your Mass,
Now take the Host, yet wipe your hand before—
It were not well to sully God with gore.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

The Pope in all his diamonds appears
At Peter's shrine—he melts in tender tears
Of joy ; and softly tells his arms' success,
And blood spilt by the French his claims to press ;
What showers of balls from the new guns are thrown
He meekly tells, with eyes like bard cast down,
Who needs be pressed ere he his rhymes recite.
His wounded foes choke up the streets.—Glad sight !
O joyful triumph—Treason's sweet reward.

In pearls, and silk, and gold, amid thy guard
Whom yesterday you hounded to their prey,
Pope ! throned in splendour 'neath thy canopy,
Priest with the three-crowned mitre ! It may be
Some day within thy palace thou shalt see
A man of sorrows, clad in mean array,
Poor and unknown. "Who art thou ?" wilt thou say;
"Vagrant, what dost thou want ? dost quit some jail ?
Why see we wool along thy shoulders trail ?
A sheep was lately there." He will reply,
"I come from far—Jesus the Lord am I."

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

The Apostle slay !—with chains the hero load !
Brown—Garibaldi, tread the martyrs' road !
What captive that ?"
The Liberator he,
Of men from pole to pole, by land, by sea—
Still wrong prevails triumphant, still it leads
By force the human heart to vilest deeds.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Well, let him go, the people's peerless Knight,
Thou matchless soldier, champion of the right,
The Paladin ; the Perfect. Let him go.
We Athens' proscript ! Sparta's proscript thou !
Our doors are open—be our honoured guest,
Make our sad dwelling by thy presence blest.
Come to us—brother of the wounded heart ;
Each would his exile, for your home impart.
Come to our foreign hearth, thy sorrows blend,
Thou whom the fates might crush but never bend ;

We'll seek the name of Hope, and we perchance
Will call it Italy—you call it France ;
And we will watch, since eve doth thought supply,
Waiting for right—the stars rise in the sky.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Friend, though oppressed alike—we still are strong.
We to each other will our stories tell,
You how beneath your sword the Bourbon fell,
I in your ears Paris's dark fate will pour,
Or Homer read beside the sounding shore.
Then you pursue your course, so stern and strange—
There too shall glare, to conflagration change.

O men of Italy, he was your stay.
People ! through him Rome had been yours to-day ;
His warrior arm, his great prophetic soul
Had made it yours, then raised by wise control.

Yes, calm—inspired with loftiness so vast
That he was kin to all the heroic past.
Rome he had forged anew, the pattern shewn
Of all its ancient worth, its old renown.
All your conflicting states he had combined ;
The North and South in strength harmonious joined—
Joined Dante's soul to Juvenal's fierce zeal,
And steeped your liberated hearts in steel.
The Titan's steps he showed, and bade you come.
Weep, Italy ! He would have made you Rome.

The crime is done. By whom ? That Pope ?—not so.
That King ?—not he. They could not deal the blow.
Who then is guilty ? He, man mean and small,
Who crouched in ambuscade behind our wall ;

Greek Sinon, Hebrew Judas! who by stealth,
With treacherous smilings, watched the common-
wealth.
His oath upon his brow, his dagger drawn,
He stands 'mid kings. O group, scarce human born!
A man whom lightnings do not all forget.
Felon! who triple guards has round him set
In vain. His turn approaches. When? 'Tis nigh!
Hear you that deep, low sound that threats from high?
Kings! a dark shadow steals your palace o'er;
Like a death-warrant rapping at your door,
The growling thunder claims some forfeit head.—

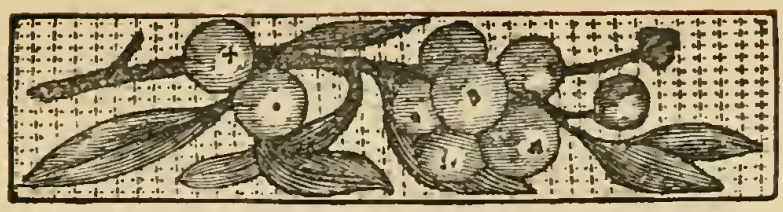
Meanwhile, the dreadful scent of slaughtered dead,
Mingled with incense of *Te Deums* proud,
Rises from grassy mead and leafy wood,
From steppes, marsh, valley, from each place and
spot;
From Paris, stained with blood—so soon forgot;
From Mexico, Crete, Poland, sorrow's home,
And Italy, a smell of death doth come,
As if upon the globe beneath the day,
In season of its bloom and ripe display,
Red carnage, upas of the earth, grown mad,
Expanded all its flowers, immense and sad.
The slain, the massacred, are all around;
Dead strew the earth, yet thought maintains its ground.
They lie stretched out upon the vengeful plains;
The call to arms upon their lips remains.
Sown seem they! True! the furrow of that seed
Is liberty, and death the wind they need.
The patriot martyrs are the grain sublime
Spread o'er that dark abyss—the future time.
Heroes spring up, the mangled dead decay,
O mystery, do thy work!—bare, castaway,

Their gaping wounds appealing to the sky,
These dead in silent expectation lie.

And the while Kings in their ill-omened joy
Feast 'mong themselves, with triumph proud and high ;
Whilst their Olympus with delight abounds,
With pomp, and mirth, and dance, and festive sounds,
Laughs, sings, and shows to men's contented mood
Sultans and Czars in loving brotherhood—
See there, on desert plains, the pool beneath,
The brotherhood of vultures and of death.
There, round their prey, see beasts sepulchral meet,
The crow on carrion fed, the eagle fleet,
Vultures, and hawks, and kites, fierce swallows they
Straight to the shambles wing their eager way,
Flock to the corpse with hoarse and hungry tones,
One tears the quivering flesh and one the bones,
Calling their like with eyes that fiery glow,
Gulp rills of blood that 'twixt the pebbles flow.

When, slumbering people, will ye wake again ?
Not prostrate should the beaten-down remain.
You sleep, the blood upon your hands, the mark
Left on you by your prisons hard and dark,
The brand of fetters still is on your wrist.
Have you no souls, you who could once resist ?
The Empire is a cave where every kind
Of darkness keeps you in its fog confined.
You sleep ! Your honour, and his traitor plot,
Right ! freedom ! heavenly treasures !—all forgot.
You close your heavy eyes, and careless be,
High Heaven affronting by your apathy.
Awake !—bestir yourself ; arise !—be bold ;

Your giant life once more let us behold.
Such lengthened sleep does ignominious grow.
Art weary ?—deaf ?—art dead ? It is not so.
Have you no knowledge in your abject state ?
Disgrace each moment grows more deep and great !
Hear you not tramplings o'er your head ? 'Tis they,
The kings, the tyrants, making holiday.
You sleep upon your dunghill—who were free
Become a beast of burden. Well, but see,
The ass can bray, an ox some sound can find—
Feel in the dark since they have made you blind.
Thou once so great, arise ! time flies apace ;
E'en in this darkness you perchance may place
Your hand on shame, perchance on fame. Once more
Stretch out your arm and the dark wall explore ;
Some prize unlooked for may the gloom conceal.
Perchance you may succeed to find, to feel,
To seize a sword in your funereal grasp
While groping in the dark—and fiercely clasp.



[The two following poems—*Reponse à un acte d'Accusation* and *En Marche*, have been added to this collection because of their autobiographical interest. In the former, we have the poet's own account of what he claims to have effected in freeing French poetry from the pedantries, affectations, and unnecessary shackles of all kinds, which had surrounded it up to his own time; and in the latter he gives an account of his progressive change from being an extreme Royalist to being an ultra-Democrat. The two poems might justly be entitled, *Apologia pro vitâ atque arte meâ.*]

REPLY TO AN ACT OF IMPEACHMENT.

WHAT! I'm the ogre, I'm the scapegoat whom
In this chaotic age to wrath you doom?
Good taste and the French rules of verse I tread
Beneath my feet; and have to Darkness said,
"Come!" and it came. This then is what you say.
Language, Art, Tragedy, Rules, Opera,
These lights, are quenched, and I'm the guilty wight—
Have done it, and upset the urns of Night.
Of all this ruin, I'm the tool inept;—
That's what you think. Well, I the charge accept.
'Tis I 'gainst whom your prose infuriate clanks;
You call me "Raca," and I answer "Thanks."—
That march of time, which from one church removes
To seek another, and by change improves,
Art, Liberty, let those vast themes be tried,
And viewed, if so you please, by their least side

Through the decreasing lens. I ne'er deny
That, after all, that dreadful man am I.—
And though in truth I think that I have wrought
More and worse crimes, of which you have not thought—
Have touched upon some questions erst obscure,
And fathomed evils, and sought out the cure;
Packs of old Ass-dom dared aside to throw,
And shaken the dead past, from high to low;
Ransacked the substance than the form no less;—
We'll stop at this. I own my wickedness.
Dread demagogue am I: from laws set free:
Destroyer of the ancient A B C.

Let's chat.—When I left school, its Latin theme
And verse; a pale, grave boy, much apt to dream;
Thin, shy, with eyes cast downwards: when I tried
To judge and understand, and opened wide
My eyes to Art and Nature; language then
Was like the State—split up 'twixt common men
And nobles. Poetry held regal rank;
Some words were lords, some to the gutter sank.
Not more than Paris is with London mixt
Were syllables, but each in order fixt,
As horse and foot march on in diverse line,
So Language was the state ere Eighty-nine.
Well born, or ill, words lived marked out in caste;
Those noble were with tragic heroes classed.
Their law decorum kept beyond reproach;
They rode to Versailles in the king's own coach.
The rest a lot of beggars, gallows knaves,
Provincial; some the slang of convict slaves,
Devoted to all kinds of sordidness;
In markets torn to tatters; stockingless,
Wigless; for prose and farce alone designed:

The common folk of style, to shade consigned,
Villains, snobs, cads, whom Vaugelas their chief
In dictionary hulks, brands with an F.,
Painting low common life of vulgar cit,
Vile, scorned, tabooed, and but for Moliere fit.
Racine looked on these rascals much askance;
If Corneille found one in his lines perchance
He kept it; all too great to bid it go:
And Voltaire cried, "Corneille is getting low."
Corneille, good soul, kept still and answered not.
Then I, the brigand, came, and cried out, "What?
These always first, those always last appear!"
Then on th' Academy, stayed dowager—
Hiding "tropes" 'neath her petticoats away,
And on the Alexandrine's close array
I turned the revolutionary wind—
The "Red Cap" on th' old dictionary bind.
Henceforth no words of high or low degree!
A tempest in the inkstand I decree—
I mixt among the ghosts with terror fraught,
'Mid the black folk called words, white swarms of thought.
I said no single word will I permit
Without a plain idea to enlighten it.
Dreadful discourse! syllepsis, hypallage
Shuddered:—I climbed on Aristotle's stage!
Declared all words were equal, free, of age—
All ravagers, invaders, crammed with rage
Those tigers—Scythians, Huns (though fierce they be)
Were mere "bow-wows" to my audacity.
I leapt out of the ring: the compass broke,
Called pigs plain pigs;—why not? the truth I spoke!
Guichardin, Borgia named, and Tacitus
Vitellius.—Fierce, explicit, rancorous,
His collar, made of epithets, I broke

From the dog's neck. In grass beneath the oak
Heifer and cow I let together won—
(One Berenice was, one Margaton).
The Ode got drunk with Rabelais; awful sight!
They danced Ca ira upon Pindus height.
Bare breasted muses sang the Carmagnole;
Bombast shook in his Spanish ruff—poor soul—
John, donkey-man, the rustic myrtle wed,
Kings, "What's o'clock?" like other mortals, said.
I killed snow—alabaster—ivory,
Took away jet from pupil of the eye;
To th' arm, I said, be white! a plain good word.
The corpse of verse in its old grave I stirred.
I mentioned dates! And Mithridates might
The siege of Cyzicus correctly cite.
Horror! the Laises got named aright—
And words by Restaut, combed out morn and night,
Which had of the great Louis kept the gait,
And wore perukes—to such old-fashioned pate.
The revolution from its lofty tower,
Cried "Change yourself," "Be filled," (for now's the hour).
With spirit of the words, you slaves retain,
Then, the wig reddened, and became a mane.
Freedom! 'Tis thus when in revolt we rise—
We become lions in these spaniels' eyes;
And in th' accursed whirlwind which we raised,
All kinds of words in conflagration blazed.
In Lhomond I these proclamations placed.
You read—"End all this foolery" "Make haste!"
Let Bouhours, Brossettes! to the axe be brought,
They fastened manacles on human thought.
Prose! Verse! to arms, close ranks beneath your flag.
Look here! the strophe's mouth stopt with a gag,

The ode in chains, the drama clapt in gaol ;
O'er Racine dead, see Campestron prevail.
Then Boileau ground his teeth. "Be still," said I,
"You're out of date." Then through the storm I cry—
"To rhethoric, war ! to syntax, peace assured."
All Ninety-three burst forth, and at its sword
Æthos, Ithos, Pathos, doth terror blanch—
Cathos and Pourceaugnac the furies launch.
Dumarsais chase ; with hideous dance and scream,
Filling their syringe with Permesse's stream.
The syllables set free from torture claim
The rustic noun, the verb consigned to shame,
Came on ; they drank large draughts from horror's stream
They dared to disinter Athaliahs' dream—
The speech of Théramène cast to the wind ;
Since when that star the Institute declined,
They mads a clean sweep of the former board.
Drunk with the blood of phrases I applaud—
Seeing the strophe foaming, raging, proud,
Speaking its thoughts in thundering voice and loud,
Seize roughly on th' old rules of poetry,
And seeing, 'mid the crowd that hoarsely cry,
Hung, by all words (which erst good taste declined),
The letter "noble," on the lantern mind.—
Yes I'm that Danton, I that Robespierre.
'Gainst courtly words which their long rapiers wear
I've made their valets (vulgar words) rebel :
Cut Richelet's throat, where Dangeau lately fell.
Yes, 'tis all true : I do confess these crimes ;
I've ta'en, thrown down the old Bastile of rhymes.
Nay more, I've broken all those chains as well [hell
Which bound the word of "people" . . . Drawn from
All the damned words condemned to dark abyss,
And crushed the spirals of periphrasis ;

And mixt, confounded, levelled to the earth
The alphabet, dark tower of Babel's birth.
Nor was I ignorant that the hand which wrought
Deliverance for the word—delivered thought.

The mark of human work is unity,
The arrow one ; at the same butt does fly.

Thus I agree : In honest style are said
My several crimes—and here I bring my head.
You must be getting old : and so, papa,
For the tenth time I "mea culpa" say.
Call Beauzée God.—Then I'm an Atheist.
The tongue was decent, fine, trim, what you list ;
Tristan, Boileau, blue ceiling, fleur de lis,
Forty arm chairs, the throne in midst of these,
I've troubled all, in this far famed saloon,
Nay somewhat broken. The right word (that clown)
Was but a corporal. He's a colonel made.
Pronouns are democratic by my aid ;
The participle and the verb have I
Made hydras and wild beasts of anarchy.
You've "Reum confitentem," vain your blows.—
I to the nostril said—"Why you're a nose."
To the "long golden fruit"—"Sir, you're a pear"—
To Vaugelas—"A Blockhead's all you are !"—
To words I said—"Be a Republic. Be
An immense hive, labour, believe, and see,
Love, live." I've shaken all things, and morose,
Thrown noble verse to the black dogs of prose.

And what I did, others have better done—
Calliope, Euterpe's frozen tone,
Polymnia, their stilted airs have lost,
The balanced hemistitch away we tost;

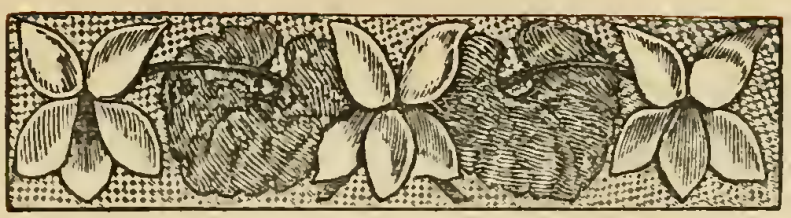
True ! Curse away ! Verse on whose brows were found
Of yore, twelve plumes in stately order bound :
Which ever on its two snow shoes danced by
(One Etiquette, and one called Prosody),
Now breaks the rule (the chiselled form abjured),
And from a shuttlecock becomes a bird ;
'Scapes from the cage "Cœsura," and o'er hills
And dales,—a lark,—the sky with music fills.

All words in day's full light at present soar ;
Writers to liberty the tongue restore,
Thanks to these bandits, birds of fear and storm ;
Truth, driving off the dismal pedant swarm,—
Fancy, the hundred-tongued, whose eager strains
Shatters the windows in the bourgeois's brains,
And she, who laughs, sighs, sings, the triple-browed
Poetry, which Shakespeare, and which Plautus sowed ;
One 'mong the plebs, and one among the mob,
Which, through the nations pours the lore of Job,
And 'mid his laughter Horace's good sense,
Which, of heaven's azure thrills the soul immense,
And sacred Mænad, with bright phrenzied eye,
By steps of time mounts to eternity,
The Muse ; to guide us back now reappears,
Again o'er human misery shedding tears,
Smiles and consoles, and goes from depth to height,
On every brow reflects with splendour bright
Her storm-swept flight, her lyre whence flames arise,
And on her million wings, her million eyes.

The movement, thus its work doth finished see,
And revolution, progress, thanks to thee
Now vibrates in the book, the voice, the air ;
In words the reader finds it living there.

It cries, sings, laughs, and its now freed soul
As well as speech is rescued from control.
In novels, its low whisper women hear ;
It opes two eyes, whence do two flames appear—
(One eye o'er thought, and one o'er labour wakes) ;
She, by the hand, her sister Freedom takes,
And bids her enter man by every pore.
And prejudices, like the madrapore,
Formed by abuses through long ages heaped,
By clash of wandering words away are swept.
Full of her will, her object, and her soul,
She is of Drama, prose and verse, the whole ;
She is expression, she is sentiment—
Lamp in the street, star in the firmament,
Explores th' unfathomable depths of speech,
Breathes into Art, and everywhere doth reach ;
And, by God's will, after that she hath placed
Her pride in peoples, from their brow effaced
The lines, and raised aloft the trampled crowd,
She not alone is Right, but Thought, avowed.

PARIS, *January* 1834.



ONWARDS.

Letter of the Marquis du C d'E. to Victor Hugo, Paris, 1846.

["Sir—When you were a child I used to see you at your revered mother's house, and indeed we are somewhat related, unless I am mistaken.* Your first odes "La Vendee," "Louis XVII.," etc., I praised; but since 1827, when your ode called "A la Colonne" was written, you have forsaken those wholesome doctrines and abjured legitimacy. The liberal faction clapped their hands at your apostasy—I deplored it. You to-day are a pure demagogue in the full current of Jacobinism. Your anarchical speech on the affairs of Gallicia was more fit for the benches of a convention than for the tribune of a Chamber of Peers. You are now actually joining in the Carmagnole! I tell you you are ruining yourself! What are you now aiming at? Since those honourable days of your youth what have you done, and whither are you bound? . . ."]

MARQUIS, with my loved mother, many a day
You spent, and would my lessons hear me say.
You always brought me bonbons nice and rare,
And while there were "My Lords," we cousins were.

* Count Leopold Hugo has lately stated that his family were related to Volney, the celebrated traveller, who died a peer of France; and also to the Breton family, Normand du Buisson.

You were old, I was young: and by your knees
You took me, and 'twixt two antistrophes
In praise of kings and Coblentz you would tell
Stories of wolves, of rustics punished well;
Of ogres, Jacobins, all true and grave,
And which I swallowed with the sweets you gave;
And with good appetite devoured all
When I was yet a Royalist——and small.

I was a gentle child, a good man's seed:
When simple, truthful, credulous, indeed
Upright and pure, my eyes to fancy wide,
In lisping tones my earliest rhymes I tried.
Marquis, you found them somewhat rough, you said
(You in the Graces' grotto being bred)—
"Still——'Tis not bad——You're born to fill a place,"
And, sacred thought—bright beamed my mother's face,
When greeting you—still clings to memory
My mother's tone: Morn! April! fleeting joy!
Where is that smile, that voice that so could please?
All fled away, as do the leaves of trees.
O kisses of a mother! my sad brow
Is still the same, though deeper shaded now.
No kisses there but numerous wrinkles show.

And you were witty, Marquis.—High or low,
Luck or ill luck, with easy soul you met;
Rich, poor, the page of Marie Antoinette.
As emigré, at that uncertain date
Well did you bear the heat and frost of fate.
You hated Rousseau, but Voltaire you loved;
Pigault-Lebrun, your polished taste approved.
Diderot you voted to the pillory,
And much detested Madame Dubarry,

While Gabrielle d'Estrée you pronounced divine—
Not more than she, who did in letters shine
De Sevigné, sweet dame, was moved to see
Bleach 'neath the moon, and dangle from the tree
'Mid yellow leaves, rocked by the winds and blown,
Rustics hung up by the good Duke of Chaulnes.
Did you take care for villagers beat down
By force, or for the poor ill-treated clown ?
Ere eighty-nine, incendiary gay,
You wore your sword after the sprit-sail way ;
Your velvet back with powder whitened o'er—
With light and heavy step you crushed the poor.

Though the old wrongs did you no injury.
Young, you had in you all nobility:
Bright spirits ! Montmorency, Choiseul, Noailles,
With courteous honour of a lover's broil,
Sulks and caresses—Titus—Berenice.
Your youth the Revolution seemed to please ;
You followed in the wake of Talleyrand—
Sphinx whom you thought quite plain to understand.
When he was christened you were standing near,
And joyous called the babe "You pretty dear!"
Protest, Ligne, Fronde, Reform, or Deficit,
You knew not greatly what to make of it.
You fairly clapt your hands when Lafayette,
Leviathan, in baby linen set ;
Next, panic-struck when blazed the torches round,
In tiger Mirabeau, you beauty found.
And you at evening near your hearth that blazed—
While Paris from her breast the Bastille razed,
While all St. Antoine in its sabots sped,
And the great people, as from tombs the dead
Sprang forth amazed from its long-borne disgrace
While six October, twenty June took place,

And August ten, you sang some trifling air,
Which Boufflers simpered to the lightning's glare.

For you, at first, were of the purblind band
Who France, night, tide, did nothing understand,—
Who laughed as if all this were harmless sport,
Who,—the heaped plaints, by roaring ages wrought,
And haggard men, deemed but a noisy pack ;—
And, to the crowds, to famine, and attack
Lightly gave drawing-room riddles to be guessed :—
And when fierce storms all the black skies possessed,
When crouched on threshold of dark mystery
The Revolution watched terrific nigh :
Sceptic, unskilled her savage eye, to trace
Her claws ! or through the night her unknown face—
The unshaped darkness—mocked with jests and winks ;
And bandied riddles with th' enormous sphinx.—
You said—Ill luck, beggars dissatisfied
Went mad. Too late to stop the flood we tried.
Some bargain would have saved the whole, may be,
May'nt freedom well consist with monarchy ?
Subjects, to save the throne were a grand thing !
Then you grew sad and gloomy muttering
The wisest could not save that good old throne :
All's dead ; Great Kings ! that Paris ! Babylon !
Montespan, Marly, Maintenon, St. Cyr !
You wept.—Good God ! could they the crash defer ?
Those men who wished—with forms of rule and sure
Wrongs we blushed over, laws that galled us sore,
The nation, right divine, old codes, old use,
To fit on Revolution kingly shoes ?
The lion's paw, this crazy slipper burst.

II.

Then you lost sight of me.—A wind dispersed
Our days, our reason, hearts, and destinies,
To the four corners of the livid skies.
Each in his darkness sought some light to find,
And on my first was graft my second mind.—
Aye, the same stem, with other bloom and leaf,
Combats I well have known, and toil and grief,
False friends, those ties soon truly serpents styled,
Borne loss on loss, and works on works have piled.
Having forgotten you—I nothing hide—
Lo, Marquis ! in my house I hear a stride—
'Tis yours ; a voice, 'tis yours.—And me you name
Apostate, who th' Apostle's title claim.
'Tis you indeed, by fear to fury wrought.
Old goose ! The Marquis by the Terror caught,
Half swallowed by the hydra, scolds and calls.

Time having 'twixt us kept his intervals,
Which makes the old to count as children still
Grown men ; moreover, seeing me but ill,
You cry with haggard eyes, and anger red,
"Ah, see the rogue who from his side has fled !"
With fist you show, not finger, on the wall,
Your kindred. And my mother's faith recall.
I kiss your cold feet, O my mother dead !—
—Then you, shame, anarchy, rebellion, said,
Detested age where none will quiet stay.
And next—the why and how you bid me say.
And stirring the still dead who sleep in night,
Robespierre, Charette, Lambese, and Marat cite.
You tell me in a tone replete with gall,
"The knave's a Jacobin, a Liberal.
Hoarse with the people's songs his voice resounds

Why look at me across the wall that bounds?
Whence came? where go you? why this boldness
shown?
What's happened since I saw you?"
"I have grown!"

What? 'cause 'mongst men my cradle chanced to be,
Who, Hell, Gomorrah, Sodom, could but see
Beyond the ancient customs, the old faith;
What? Because once my mother saved from death
Twelve priests in Vendée in a single day.
Because in childhood 'neath ancestral sway
I only knew at first the lesson set,
A bird caught in the past as in a net;
Ere I could 'scape and to the forest go,
My feathers in my cage were forced to grow.
Because I wept; and who can say—weep yet?
O'er the poor little boy, "Louis dix sept."
Because when young with but false lights to guide,
Vendeé my sight engrossed, and France could hide;
Because I Breton heroism praised,
Chouan o'er Marceau, Stofflet o'er Danton raised,
Because great rustics, hid great men from me,
And I misread the age where now we be;
Because I lisped in songs of Royalty?
Am I then clenched to imbecility?
Shall I cry, back! to thought, my age, and sense?
Not so, good sooth! unblushing dotard, hence!
In trees shall I mere water sprinklers find?
In Nature's bosom, in life's storm and wind
Shall I exist by ignorance enthralled,
In Loriquet, Laharpe, entombed and walled?
To be, yet not to live—look—yet not see—
And when night comes must the sky seem to me
Spangled with Fleur de lys, and not with stars!

III.

E'en in his Church, the King masks God, and bars
Heaven's sight !— . . . .

IV.

Now listen. I have lived and dreamt—
A life of tears has brought enlightenment.
You held my cradle in your hands and made
My thought, and to my brain your thoughts conveyed;
Alas, you were the axle, I the wheel,
And, what of God, of truth, of right to feel,
Of all the lights our reason brings to view,
You and your like (and I forgive it you,
Marquis) had led my footsteps quite astray.
I aimed awry. But I retrieved my way.
Thought is the right, man's life supremely needs,
God takes him by the hand, a child, and leads
To Nature's school, which in the fields, the wood,
He founds, to give each man the spirit's food.
I've thought, I've dreamt by seas, by grassy roads,
And the first furies, of my beardless odes,
As I marched on, fell back themselves from sight.
Nature became my terror and delight.
Yes, at the time you made my lyre untrue,
Marquis ! I learnt to read in spite of you,
In that vast hieroglyphic, Nature's world,
Where fields their pages to my eyes unfurled.
That bible as a child I learnt to spell,
Where strangely mix the lovely and the fell.
Book writ upon the sky, the sea, the land,
With flower, and wind, and star, which in its hand
Creation, statue-like, holds up to sight.
Prodigious poem ! Where the storm, to night
Adds fear, and ocean makes infinity.

A-field, 'neath some vast sacred oak placed high,
I was more strong, more gentle, and more free,
And with the world felt my soul more agree.
I sought to know, dazed, trembling, colourless,
If when the dark says, No, the sun says Yes,
To seize the sense of phrases dark, I sought,
Beneath my eyes by shape and number wrought.
Throughout I saw life, love, space, liberty,
God everywhere—but nowhere royalty.

Nature's a play where many persons move :
There did I live and listen. This can prove
Birds, flowers, streams, and eve about to set.
Then I learnt man ;—another alphabet.

Evil seemed to me happy, strong, robust,
Triumphant ; I but thirsted to be just.
And as a highway robber you arrest,
Stern judge, I collared then the human breast,
And said, Why all this envy, hate, and strife ;
And I the pockets emptied out of life,
And found there, mourning, want, and weary sweat.
I've seen the wolf accuse the lamb he eat.
Truth halting, lies careering, high and haught,
Stones cast from every side, at every thought.
Alas, I've seen of right, and wrong, the reigns :
Christ, Socrates, Columbus, Huss in chains ;
For prejudice to thorns which in a wood,
You break to pass, is like. The multitude
Harks back, and wounds, while one you trample low.
Woe to Apostles, and to tribunes woe !

With care they kept true history from my sight.
I read ! and day compared with the black night—

The Ninety-three with St. Bartholomew ;
For Ninety-three, which you with horror view,
Which was to be, yet ne'er shall be again,
'Twas the blood tints which early morning stain ;
For revolutions, which revenge fulfil,
Eternal good produce from fleeting ill.
These revolutions are the evidence
Of horrors through long years become intense.
When sufferance has attained lugubrious size ;
When tyrants long have turned on human cries
The lower empire and the middle age,
And north and south in noxious union rage ;
When history nought but one vast graveyard shows,
Crecys and Rosbachs fed upon by crows ;
When foot of villains reigns, and bows the head
Of poor man, in the trough with cattle fed ;
When at this Babel's either end we spy
The eleventh Louis with his hangman by,
And the fifteenth, with his vile harlotry,
Harem for Prince, gallows for minister ;
When all flesh groans, and heaven, now sinister,
Sees human grass downtrod, its term has reached,
And bones enough have on the gibbet bleached ;
When Jesus' blood falls vainly drop by drop
For eighteen hundred years, nor crimes can stop ;
When ignorance does e'en the future blind,
And being able nought to seize or find,
Hope is no more but a small part of man ;
When by all plagues consumed, and gaunt and wan ;
When everywhere are wars and enmities—
Then suddenly one day uprise—uprise
The plainings by the wretched spectre made,
Grief the fell giant, vast, unmeasured shade
Starts forth. A cry from height to height is flashed.
The social worlds are 'gainst each other dashed.

All the dread hulks of pariah arise--
Whips, fetters, swords, affront the ears, the eyes ;
Murder, sobs, hunger, howlings of abuse,
Noises of all the past in hell let loose.
God slips the populace—the tocsin fell
Shakes with its rope, and hoarse sepulchral knell.
The Church, the Palace. So to ruin bring
Luther the Pope, and Mirabeau the King.
The whole is said, thus old worlds crumbled are.
The time is come ! Floods roll unheard afar,
And across rumours, corpses, mourning, foam,
And mountain tops, which sunken rocks become,
The ages, in despair, before them drive
These revolutions—tides that whelm and rive—
Oceans which human tears create, expand.

V.

'Tis kings who made these gulfs, but the same hand
Which sowed the seed, shrinks from the crop that grows.
The sword, rebellion names the blood which flows.

This history taught me. Yes, in single fight,
My reason killed my love of kings outright.
This made me Jacobin : what could be said ?
The Louis tail, of which you loved the head,
Scared me. In following free the forward path,
Advancing, well, I know I pain your faith,
Your creed, that cause which deathless seems to you,
Your ancestors, codes, gods, your flannels too,
And of your good old bones ne'er formed to try
And tire—that rheumatism, royalty—
'Tis vain, despite gold stick and such like things,
As owning men, I can't believe in kings,

And not believing—As I feel I speak.
Aurelius wrote—"I erred the other week;
But seeking right and truth, I ne'er allow
My former faults to bar my passage now."
I but an atom; yet like him have done.
Marquis! these twenty years, one thought alone
Has filled my soul, the human cause to serve.
Life is a sessions. At whose bar, observe!
The weak are coupled with those steeped in crime.
I have in books, in plays, in prose, in rhyme
Fought for the small, the wretched, early, late,
Before the ruthless and the fortunate.
Raised up, of clowns and actors all the tribe,
Friboulet, Marion, all whom men proscribe—
The lackeys, convicts, prostitutes; and glued
My mouth to every soul by curse pursued,
As children do, angels with golden hair—
On dying flies, their vigour to repair.
I've bent o'er every tottering thing and weak.
Kind; I did universal pardon seek,
And as I angered many people so,
While some perhaps said, "Thank you" from below,
I often gathered, soaring in the cloud,
The savage dark applause of hisses loud.
I claimed for woman and for child their right,
And tried, while warning men, to give them light.
To read, to write, to learn was all my cry,
Absorbing hulks by schools, my remedy.
For me the guilty were but witnesses,
Hoping all progress:—Greater, I confess,
The brain of Paris seemed than crown of Rome.
I saw man's spirit free.—His heart the home
Of slavery. Those chains I would remove,
And set at liberty the powers of love.
'Gainst homicidal laws I've spent my breath,

And like Alcides battle done with death.
Now here I am, still marching,—having won,
Lost, suffered, fought.—One word and I have done.
Marquis, since now we chat two doors between,
Mark you, two kinds of renegades have been ;
Some become christians, some are heathen made.
By error is a pleasant look displayed,
Leave her, she sets two fists upon her flank.
Truth, gentle to the good, but rough and frank,
Betrayed for gold, power, purple robes, instead
Becomes the spectre that shall haunt your bed.
That, is a scold ; this, the Eumenides.
Keep cool.—Good-bye now, Epimenides.

The past will not begone. On its old track
It will return, wills back, takes back, keeps back ;
With black nails scratches, and in raging mood
Blows its old storm, and swells its ancient flood ;
Cries havoc, death, and vomits its old night.
Well cry, storm, thunder, burst, and howl and bite.
The future smiling says—"Friend, go your way."

Marquis, the renegade of yesterday,
Is called To-morrow,—may from winter parts,
The butterfly no less the worm deserts.
Falstaff reformed ! Apostate he from wine.
My feet (those renegades) old shoes decline.
Love is the gentle renegade of hate,
And when with day o'erflowing and elate,
He 'scaped their dismal prisons, shining bright
The sun forswore the powers of the night.

Marquis ! you show of old wolf-lords small trace.
Frank renegade from Celts ! Come, let's embrace ;
Own, Marquis, that you felt too fierce a heat!——

VI.

Nought in my heart's real depth, I must repeat,
No, nought is changed; I still am always he
Who goes straight to the duty he can see;
Who like to Job; frail plant shakes in the wind,
Yet would truth, beauty, grandeur, justice, find.
I am that man, that child. Only one day
My spirit spread its wings and flew away.
I saw the large, pure space which claims control—
Marquis, th' horizon shifted, not the soul.
Nothing within me, but all things around:
History beamed on me, and the law I found
Of ages seeking God, bearing the ark,
Who step by step climb the vast stairs and dark.
The heavens had varied, but unchanged the eye.
Is it my fault if the blue, timeless sky—
More blue, more vast than Versailles' ceiling is?
  Is it my fault, O God! you thrill with bliss
My pulsing heart, at cry of Liberty?
That man can more of light and morning see!—
  So much the worse, the dawn with blame assault!
The sun, and not the eyesight, is in fault.
You say, Where go you? I can't tell, yet go—
No road I reckon bad, which straight I know.
Night is behind me, and the day before—
That is enough, all bars I trample o'er.
I see, that's all; believe, and nothing less!
I for my future little care profess.
Men of the past and soldiers of the shade
Assail: I face them, of no odds afraid.
The match unequal; sometimes hazardous—
Longwood and Goritz both may witness thus,
Misfortune's privilege, I ne'er profaned,
Ill fate is night, and while therein contained

Men, like the skies, appear star-glorified,
And when the evening falls, and when aside
Princes are cast,—never refused by me,
Are tears to exile, to the grave my knee,
Pangs of the fallen I must still allay,
On their black tombs their heads will answer, Yea.
My mother knows it too, and more, can see
With joy, new duties God entrusts to me :
Being in the tomb : of truth she reads the page.
On earth man serves an angel's prentisage.
Let's love, serve, help, strive, bear. My mother knows
I now am all released from empty shows ;
She knows my eyes to progress open wide,
That peril, proof, reverses, I can bide ;
That always ready, help, to speed, I tend
That great To-morrow, when mankind shall mend ;
That happy, sad, praised, exile, victor, beat,
Nought from that goal shall make my heart retreat.
This does my will, steps, cries, vows, life, control.
O, sainted tomb, you see my inmost soul.
Never, whate'er my fortune, high or low,
Shall my pure conscience bend its honest brow.
It walks serene, unconquerable, proud.
For far-off counsel, light without a cloud,
I see, across my lot whatever fate,
Disaster, or astonishment await,
In noise, or stormy winds that sweep me by,
In dawn, in dark, my sainted mother's eye !

PARIS, *June* 1856.

WRITTEN IN 1855.

After nine years this postscript I append.
Are you still there? Doubtless you've made an end.
But Marquis, hence, with ghosts one may converse.
Your grave gapes! Where are you? Outside my hearse
Like you! Dead? Nearly so, in shade profound,
My home a rock which the dark waves surround,
Sharp sea-worn crags which clouds and darkness load,
Where livid shipwreck has its fell abode.
Well, you will say, What then? The loneliness
Around me never changes more or less.
I only see the depth, the sea, the sky,
And the black clouds that pass in silence by.
The night wind shakes my roof, mixed by the gale
With frantic blasts of ocean and of hail;
The horizon seems with veil of crape spread o'er,
Insult sits at the threshold of my door,
The crumbling rock my foot denies to bear,
The wind seems frightened to approach, nor dare
To tell me whispering, in half uttered tone,
A friend's mysterious greeting hither thrown.
The noise of living creatures grows less loud;
All that I dreamt has flown, a passing cloud.
My days are now as phantoms, lone and sere,
I see the Infinite, that shroud, draw near.
You say, What then? Beside the moaning wave,
'Neath an o'erhanging cliff, I've marked my grave.
There from th' abyss are ceaseless wailings sent,
Night, horror reign—What then? I am content.

JERSEY, *January* 1855.

THE BLIND BEGGAR AND THE POET.

[Victor Hugo, meeting a blind beggar led by a little girl, wrote on a board which the old man had hung round his neck, four lines, of which the following is a translation.]

LIKE Belisarius, and like Homer, blind,
By one weak child, sole guide and guardian led,
Alms by your hands to suffering age consigned
He cannot see—God sees them in his stead.

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